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Underwriting National Sovereignty?: Policy, the Market and
Scottish Cinema, 1982-Present

By

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Thesis Abstract: *Underwriting National Sovereignty?: Policy, the Market and Scottish Cinema, 1982-Present*

This thesis aims to re-examine the industrial and cultural landscape of Scottish cinema since the advent of public funding institutions for the support of indigenous film-making. This period in Scottish cinema has been described by historians as one in which subsidy bodies have created the conditions necessary for the unprecedented flourishing of internationally high-profile national cinema production throughout the last twenty-five years. By taking a 'bottom up' approach to the period and closely analysing six films in relation to their production and reception contexts, the thesis seeks to break from the survey formats which have dominated Scottish cinema historiography and to more thoroughly explore the relationships that have existed between key films from this period, the funding bodies that have supported them and the audiences that have consumed them. In so doing it attempts at various points to supplement, qualify and critique a number of assumptions and arguments that have dominated the field of Scottish cinema studies, all while providing detailed critical and historical treatments of a number of important and sometimes overlooked films from the period.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that all of the work presented in this thesis is my own and that it has not been published in other places or been submitted for degrees at any other university.

Introduction

Beginning in 1979 with the release of Bill Forsyth's film *That Sinking Feeling*, there has been a dramatic increase in indigenous film production in Scotland and it has since become possible to speak of a Scottish national cinema where it had been previously only been possible to speak of films about Scotland. An important change in the Scottish film industry during this period has been a steady increase in public funding to assist the industry. Since 1982 a number of sources of funding for film-making in Scotland have come into being and these bodies have played a part in the production of nearly every film that has been made in Scotland since. Even though by all accounts the efforts of these institutions have been the single most important innovation of the last twenty-five years, less is known about what has guided the actions of these institutions and how the films they helped to produce related to the original goals which guided those institutions. And even though all commentators agree that the unprecedented success of Scottish film-making outside of Scotland has been one of the most remarkable aspects of the period, none have accounted for the ways in which Scottish films have circulated within the UK and abroad, or attempted to compare that circulation to their production contexts, unless it has been to criticise the tendency of resorting to stereotypes in order to appeal to foreign markets. It is these gaps that this thesis will seek to fill, while also offering more detailed textual and historical analysis of key films from the period than is found in the survey works which currently dominate the field.

In the opening chapter, I provide an overview of the literature that has shaped my inquiry. The recent acceleration in film production in Scotland has been well documented by now, with the upsurge in film-making in the nation perhaps being superseded only by the groundswell in academic writing which documents it.

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, there are a number of gaps in this emerging field and in this chapter I will seek to document problematic areas of a field that is rapidly consolidating. These areas will be shown to include reliance on untested assumptions about the effects of market pressures on the content of Scottish films; implicit arguments regarding the nature of film policy; and finally, an alignment of Scottish cinema with the political position of Scotland itself. This portion of the chapter argues that even though the story of Scottish cinema has been told numerous times, the relationships that have existed between government, markets and film-makers have yet to be fully explored.

The chapter then concludes with an explanation of the methodological approach I will be taking in the thesis as well as an overview of my corpus and the rationale for selecting it. Drawing on the theory and practice of historians working in literature, film and television studies, cultural policy studies and other fields, I will outline a methodology for handling a diverse group of primary and secondary source materials, including documents relating to production and reception, and combining this research with textual analysis of various sorts. Accompanying this outline will be some reflection on the possible limitations of such an approach, while also reflecting on the ways in which such an approach can add significantly to the current discourses surrounding Scottish cinema. As these methods are centred around in-depth study of selected films, in the final section of the chapter I lay out the reasons for making these selections. Each of the films will be shown to raise a number of issues as regards policy, industry and cultural relevance so that when taken together they form a corpus which allows for a discussion of many of the issues that have faced Scottish cinema as a whole during this period.

Chapter Two, the first case-study based chapter, analyses Bill Forsyth's 1982 film *Local Hero* and its place in Scottish cinema historiography in relation to its status as a commercially produced work targeted at foreign markets. This production context has led many of the film's critics to blame the necessity of appealing to foreign audiences for what have been argued to be regressive discourses for representing Scotland and Scottish people. The chapter argues that *Local Hero*'s representation of Scotland is far from straightforward and that readings of the film within Scottish cinema studies have been greatly influenced by critical resentment towards the idea of indigenous film-makers making films for foreign audiences. As the film is usually discussed as a case in which a promising Scottish auteur is co-opted by an external industry, the analysis will be concerned to show how textual analysis and examination of the production and reception documents suggests that authorial vision was actually a much bigger part of the film than is generally implied by Scottish critics who have looked upon the influence of the film's producer with suspicion. In so doing it makes extensive use of David Puttnam's production files as well as marketing and promotional materials created for the film's distribution in the UK and abroad.

Chapter Three examines *Mrs. Brown* (John Madden, 1997) in relation to both the devolution of British broadcasting and the increasing involvement of British broadcasters in film production, two major trends that characterize the period as a whole. The film was produced under the auspices of BBC Scotland, a body that has been given a mandate to decentralize public service broadcasting in Britain. Though originally intended for television broadcast, during production the film's theatrical distribution rights were purchased by American 'mini-major' Miramax. Such a production history makes the film an ideal case study for examining the changing relationship between the two media. It is also a case study which also allows for a

consideration of the ways in which both film and television are subject to the demands of the international market and the ways in which the ideal of public service broadcasting has changed from its original Reithian model to one that is more sensitive to pressures related to mass appeal. As the film was released in 1997, the year of the second devolution referendum in Scotland, the film's anti-devolutionary stance and apparent nostalgia for the Union and for the British Empire present problems for the narratives of Scottish cinema which posit the 'new Scottish cinema' movement as accompanying a political move away from Britain. Nevertheless, the film is also remarkable as perhaps the most 'vibrant and meaningful assertion of national difference' (Petrie, 2004, p. 1) to be found in this period. This combination of production circumstances and pointed historical interpretation raises a number of issues that are related to the so-called heritage film, a category which can be usefully applied to all textual aspects of *Mrs. Brown* as well as its position in the international film industry.

Chapter Four considers the cases of two very different depictions of the Scottish-Asian experience, Ken Loach's *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004) and the Hindi-language film *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* (Rajiv Rai, 2001) (henceforth *PLAM*). Using the calls for diversity in both policy rhetoric and national cinema studies as a point of departure, the chapter examines the documents supporting *Ae Fond Kiss*'s successful application for production subsidy in terms of the ways in which 'diversity,' 'multiculturalism' and other terms figure into the justification of the project and its allotment of public funds. Loach's film is then analyzed both in relation to his authorial persona as well as in relation to other filmic depictions of multicultural Britain, including *Bend It Like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002) and *East is East* (Damien O'Donnell, 1999). Besides acting as a representation of multicultural

Britain, the film is also an example of public monies being used to attract non-Scottish talent to make Scottish films. Finally, the film's circulation will be shown to be an example of the perils of trying too hard to 'cross over' to mainstream audiences as its distribution difficulties are shown to have been in part caused by Ken Loach's persona as an art cinema director, even if he attempts to make films which appeal to mainstream audiences.

PIAM, which was the beneficiary of less direct subsidy programmes, is used as a case study to suggest another approach to representing multicultural Scotland, that being through facilitating so-called 'Bollywood' productions which generally find much wider audiences amongst Britons of Asian descent than British films about the British-Asian experience. The attraction of Indian film-makers to Britain also demonstrates another way in which globalisation is affecting Scottish and British cinema. Though this phenomenon is usually discussed as one with solely economic benefits for the Scottish industry, it will be argued in this portion of the chapter that there are significant cultural benefits inherent in attracting such productions to Scotland and Britain.

Chapter Five focuses on the career of director Lynne Ramsay – one of the most acclaimed figures of the 'new Scottish cinema' – and the ways in which it has been assisted by bodies such as Scottish Screen and BBC Scotland. By examining Ramsay's second feature film, *Morvern Callar* (2002), and the various industrial issues, promotional discourses and cultural contexts surrounding the film, the chapter offers a unique insight into the strategy of cultivating a persona as an auteur director as a way of garnering critical caché for publicly-supported directors and the nation itself. By looking closely at the image projected in the application materials for the film, an image which emphasizes Ramsay's youth appeal and visionary artistry, the

chapter also suggests that the film's potential to 'cross over' to mainstream audiences was very important to those at Scottish Screen who supported *Morvern Callar*. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how the failure of either of Ramsay's films to find audiences has hampered her ability to secure feature film projects, and considers how this relates to the ways in which Ramsay's career and film policy and Scotland have been presented in Scottish film historiographies.

Chapter Six, the thesis's final case-study, takes as its subject another emerging Scottish director, David Mackenzie, and his second feature film *Young Adam* (2003). I begin this chapter by examining the film's promotion and reception which revolved around funding and censorship controversies – controversies which relied heavily on the celebrity of the film's star Ewan McGregor – as well as its funding application, which touts Mackenzie and national specificity as the film's main attractions. This portion of the chapter also discusses the significance of 'rediscovering' Scottish novelist Alexander Trocchi in relation to the critical and scholarly reception of the film. Despite the apparent prominence of Trocchi, Mackenzie and McGregor in these discursive contexts, closer analysis suggests that Jeremy Thomas, the film's very experienced producer, was the figure who wielded the most influence over the project in terms of its promotion and reception as well as its framing as both a genre film and a work of art cinema. Such a suggestion, which is strengthened by comparing *Young Adam* to other films that Thomas has produced throughout his career, will serve to bring us back to the influence of the producer, an influence that was seen as a problem in the academic reception of *Local Hero*.

The thesis then concludes with an extended comparison between *Local Hero* and *Young Adam* in light of the research presented in their respective case studies as well as the thesis as a whole. With this comparison, I will attempt to establish a

number of patterns, similarities and differences which will illuminate the industrial and cultural environment that have shaped Scottish films during this period. As such, the comparison will allow me to conclude the thesis by intervening in a number of current and longstanding debates in Scottish cinema historiography.

It is hoped that the research presented in the following pages will go some ways to adding to and refining our knowledge of the recent upsurge in film-making in Scotland, and that it can also contribute our understanding of contemporary film production in small nations, including the ways in which government, the local film industry and the global market interact. As Scottish cinema has been in this period, and perhaps will always be, attached to British cinema it is also hoped that the thesis will also be of use to those seeking to understand the complexities of British cinema as a whole. Finally as nearly every national cinema, including those in America and India, are shaped by the influence of government and the pursuit of global audiences, it is hoped that the analysis of one specific national cinema in this thesis can provide a methodological model and a comparative case study for any number of other national cinemas which face difficulties that are both very similar to those facing Scotland and at the same time very different.

It is with such an overarching structure and goals in mind that I now turn to the review of the literature and the outlining of my methodology and corpus.

Chapter 1 – Review of the Literature, Methodology and Corpus

Introduction

In this opening chapter of the thesis, I will have three objectives. The first of these will be to map the field of Scottish cinema studies, concentrating on the tendencies and assumptions which have characterized the field throughout its history and which persist in current debates in which this thesis will hope to intervene. The second objective will be to explicate the methodology which I will employ throughout this thesis, concentrating on not only what this methodology consists of, but also how it differs from current approaches within the field and what it can and cannot bring to the field. The final objective will be to detail the reasons for selecting the films I have chosen for my corpus and how I plan to show that such a relatively small selection of films can be used to make larger points about the whole of Scottish cinema during this period.

Section 1: Review of the Literature: Scottish Cinema Studies

The last twenty-five years has seen an unprecedented growth in the critical literature regarding Scottish national cinema, to the extent that it is now possible to discuss long-term trends and tendencies within a field of inquiry which was virtually non-existent before 1982. In this section I will seek to chronicle the development of Scottish cinema studies from the groundbreaking publication of the *Scotch Reels* anthology through the work of Duncan Petrie and up to the current debates in the field. Rather than exhaustively walking through the contents of each work, what I will

be seeking to demonstrate in this section is that some ideas and conceits can be found consistently throughout the history of the field and that these have become the collective assumptions in the current state of the field, in spite of the fact that they have never undergone substantial critical and historical scrutiny. These include the conception of the market, particularly the international market, as exerting a deleterious influence on Scottish films; the related conceit that instruments of policy have created the environment necessary for a culturally worthwhile Scottish cinema to flourish; and the idea that the condition of Scottish cinema has mirrored the political situation of the nation itself as it is supposed to be breaking away from the UK and looking to forge international relationships of its own. It will be my position in this chapter that such conceits have become the ‘commonsense’ of the field and I will go on to argue throughout the thesis that this has had the effect of obscuring a number of important historical complexities about not only the films which I will take as my corpus but also the whole of the national cinema itself. With such a framework in mind, I will now turn to a roughly chronological survey of the history of Scottish cinema studies, beginning with the *Scotch Reels* anthology.

1.1: Colin McArthur, the Market and Policy Polemics: *Scotch Reels* and After

Published in 1982, *Scotch Reels* was for all intents and purposes the founding text of Scottish cinema study. Without wishing to slight all of the contributors to the volume, or to imply that the essays were completely homogenous, I will here be concerned with discussing the anthology as a collective statement and will restrict my overview of the individual contributions to two (Colin McArthur’s and Cairns Craig’s) which I feel to have become the most influential on the field as a whole. The

collection, which was based on an event at the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1981, and was in part a reaction to the controversially defeated devolution referendum of 1979 (McArthur, 2005), sought to bring to Scottish cinema the same kind of attention that was being paid to literary and theatrical works in contemporary Scottish cultural studies as a result of the devolutionary zeitgeist and the accompanying intellectual national-cultural introspection. Explicitly drawing on the work of cultural critic Tom Nairn, who in *The Break-Up of Britain* had argued that Scottish national culture was mired in the backward representational tropes of tartanry and kailyardism, the essays in *Scotch Reels* collectively sought to appraise the representational patterns which had dominated images of Scotland in film and television. The writers also set out to identify what they saw as potentially progressive representational tendencies and to suggest ways to ameliorate the ways in which the nation was portrayed on the screen. One of the collection's stated goals was thus to directly intervene in the state of Scottish film production to encourage governmental assistance for the film industry while also setting out the aesthetic and representational guidelines for a more culturally relevant cinema. The link between the historiographical and industrial interventionist projects is encapsulated by Colin McArthur in his introduction: 'The questions uppermost in the minds of those associated with [*Scotch Reels*] are why Scottish film culture is so limited in achievement and what can be done about it' (1982a, p. 1); and later in the same piece: 'The present volume characterises Scottish film culture as profoundly backward and underachieving, points to some of the historical and structural reasons for this, and proposes certain remedies' (1982a, pp. 5-6). Such language makes it clear that the collection takes a view of Scottish cinema, and Scottish culture, as underdeveloped in relation to the rest of the world, a position

which is related to Nairn's perception of Scotland as a national culture that is 'cramped, stagnant, backward-looking, [and] parochial' (1981, pp. 131).

One of the key underlying assumptions for this project, as the *Scotch Reels* writers conceived of it, was the relationship between the representational problems that they were concerned with detailing and the economic predicament of Scotland within the world media economy. Initiating what would become a major theme of Scottish cinema studies, the conditions of the marketplace, especially the export-oriented marketplace, were presented as demanding that the most simple and stereotypical sorts of representations were those that film-makers deployed in order to present 'Scottishness' to the world. Underscoring this problem for the *Scotch Reels* writers was the fact that such representations were invariably constructed by non-Scots operating from bases outside of Scotland, with the films under examination emanating mostly either from Hollywood or from London.

This pattern of negative representation is described as predating its manifestations in film or television. The anthology's opening essay is one by Cairns Craig¹ on the representational tendencies of nineteenth-century Scottish literature. The attitude the piece takes towards its subject is seen in its title: 'Myths Against History: Tartanry and Kailyard in 19th Century Scottish Literature.' Before reading a word of the article it is apparent that Craig will continue the line began by Nairn in *The Break-Up of Britain*, which opposed popular culture to history and politics. Craig here primarily concerns himself with two works: Walter Scott's *Waverley* and J.M. Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls*, both of which were works of historical fiction and according to Craig exemplary of tartanry and kailyardism respectively. Craig, like Nairn before him, associates the representational shortcomings of the tropes with their status as commercially popular and, crucially, exportable discourses. Describing the

economic pressures affecting kailyard writers, Craig offers this explanation for their popularity among Scottish emigrés in export markets such as the United States and Canada:

It is important to recognise that Kailyard's success is not just the exploitation of Scottish lower-class life by exiled Scots for a public largely made up of exiles who want to remember, nostalgically, the land that they have left behind, but also want to be convinced that they were right to leave it behind. (1982, p. 11)

The nuanced description of the market demands that Craig argues shaped kailyard fiction here is quite intricate: it was not just simple nostalgia, but also a very specific argumentative position that it was a good idea to leave Scotland, which demanded that the writers employed negative depictions of the nation. That these market demands are what made for 'bad' fiction again recalls Nairn, who made very pointed usage of the sales figures for Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* in establishing the export-oriented commercial motivations of kailyard writers (1981, p. 158).² Craig's argument is important for my analysis here as it is an important manifestation of two intellectual manoeuvres which will come to be motifs as I proceed in this chapter. Not only will the blaming of export markets for cultural shortcomings recur again and again, but the rhetorical pattern of juxtaposing cultural product with commercial context as a way of establishing the effect of market forces, without demonstrating a link between the two, will also be shown to be present throughout Scottish cinema studies.

Both of these tendencies see further usage in McArthur's own contribution to the volume, which has become the most influential of the collection's essays. Here McArthur examines a range of films set in Scotland and which he argues offer some sort of ideologically-charged representation of the nation and its people. McArthur

finds that these films generally utilise discursive positions (a synonym, according to McArthur, for stereotypes [1982b, p. 40]) which blend elements of tartanry and kailyardism: 'Axiomatically, it could be asserted that representations of Scotland and the Scots offer tartan exteriors and kailyard mores' (1982b, p. 41). From this generalization, McArthur charts a history of films about Scotland, noting a period of 'classic kailyardism' before World War II, which featured adaptations of canonical kailyard novels such as Barrie's *The Little Minister* and Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush*, as well as a concomitant period of arch-tartan films, including the first versions of *Rob Roy* and *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (1982b, pp. 42-45). Turning to the postwar period, McArthur identifies what he sees as the 'definitive modern statements of tartanry and kailyard in the cinema' (1982b, p. 45). The specific films that McArthur lists under this rubric include some that have become a black-list of sorts for Scottish film culture: *Brigadoon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1954), *Whisky Galore!* (Alexander Mackendrick, 1949), *The Maggie* (Alexander Mackendrick, 1954) and others. In arguing that such works give an ideologically regressive portrait of their respective Scottish characters, McArthur points to what he sees as the disengagement of such figures from the world of politics and economics. He cites *The Maggie*, with its story of a rich American businessman being connived by the scurrilous crew of a Scottish Clyde puffer, as an example of the distorted view of 'real-world' economics, in this case the massive investment American corporations were making in the UK at the time the film was made (1982b, pp. 47-48).

Providing reasons for the widespread deployment of regressive discourses in Scottish films, McArthur turns to their industrial contexts. The prewar films, which McArthur called the classical manifestations of tartanry and kailyard, are discussed in terms of exportability, as they are partially explained by mention of Alexander

Korda's attempts to break into the American market (1982b, p. 45). The interests of American and English studios, especially Ealing, in meeting the demands of their respective home markets are implicitly suggested as being the source of the distorting discursive practices of films like *Brigadoon* or *Whisky Galore!*. Even while praising the film *The Brave Don't Cry* (Philip Leacock, 1952), an example of what McArthur considers a specimen of the potentially progressive representational tendency he terms 'Clydesidism,' McArthur finds fault when he detects the influence of commercial concerns. Writing on what he sees as the film's contrived ending, he blames the film's producers' insistence on creating a role for their budding star John Gregson (1982b, p. 57). Capitalism, in the eyes of the overtly Marxist critic McArthur, again causes a ideological and aesthetic flaw even in the working-class realist films that McArthur sees as being the most ideologically promising.

Having argued that market forces have been negative influences upon Scottish representations and having noted the lack of an indigenous film industry, McArthur turns to the institutions which he sees as intended to safeguard Scottish culture, and criticizes such bodies for their ineffectiveness in the arena of cinema. McArthur blames the involvement of 'powerful establishment bodies such as business concerns, banks and the National Trust' for having 'propelled Scottish filmmakers headlong into the gaping jaws of tartanry and kailyardism' (1982b, p. 58). He goes on to chastise institutions such as the Scottish Film Council for their failure to 'create the conditions for the development of more politically and artistically relevant discourses' and to 'keep a historic appointment with the discourses of marxism and modernism' (1982b, p. 67). Proper institutional management would thus protect Scottish filmmakers from the pressures of capitalism, and this would subsequently allow for a more authentic national cinema, which McArthur describes in terms of both greater

political engagement and a higher degree of cinematic artistry. McArthur's, as well as that of many of the *Scotch Reels* contributors, suggestion for the form which such an institutional intervention should take was a workshop system which would involve providing greater public access to film-making, rather than the encouragement of film-making on an industrial scale. These suggestions were never realised (for reasons explained in detail by John Caughie [1990, pp. 24-25]), but what is important to appreciate is that the *Scotch Reels* project was one that was explicitly prescriptive and interventionist, as well as overtly Marxist in orientation. As has been noted by several subsequent commentators (e.g. Caughie, 1990, p. 19; Petrie, 2000a, p. 5), the history presented within the volume was selective and overlooked films – most notably those of Bill Douglas – which would have problematized the Marxist polemic being put forward by the collection. Such gaps demonstrate the deleterious effects that the eagerness to express arguments of political economy can have on historical projects, something that should be pointed out now as it will be shown to recur throughout the history of the field.

In the years following the publication of *Scotch Reels*, Scottish cinema made it on to the agenda of 'mainstream' British cinema studies, evidenced by Alistair Michie's contribution to Charles Barr's *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema* (1986). Michie, avowedly following in the footsteps of Nairn and McArthur (1986, p. 253), argues that many of the by now canonically tartan/kailyard films (*Brigadoon*, *Whisky Galore!*, etc.) share a common institutional context: they were all produced by concerns based outside of Scotland. Following the *Scotch Reels* line, Michie argues that this institutional context meant that the films were not 'authentic' representations of the nation. The remedy which Michie proposes is the

establishment of an indigenous infrastructure which would shield film-makers from the pressures which led to works such as *Whisky Galore!*:

It would be unfair to chastise Scottish film-makers like Grierson, Mackendrick or Forsyth for remaining tied to the old discursive positions, since, as Tom Nairn said of the literary figures before them, it was impossible for them to work in any other mode. They all received their training elsewhere and, while typically each has voiced a yearning to return and portray their lost homeland, they have all been forced to produce their work within the confines of externally constructed production bases. (1986, p. 270)

The continuation of a combination of prescriptive criticism and Marxist political economic assumptions are thus apparent: for Michie a reversal of this institutional context, establishing homegrown institutions which would presumably cater to specifically Scottish tastes, would lead to 'better' representations of Scotland.

McArthur continued his prescriptive, interventionist project with his criticism in 1993 of the involvement of the Scottish Film Production Fund in the production of *Prague* (Ian Sellar, 1990). This critique took the form of two articles, one published in *Sight and Sound* (1993), and another in an anthology of essays on film and film industries in Ireland, Britain, and Europe (1994). Both of these pieces criticized the attempt by Scottish film policymakers to pursue what McArthur perceived to be commercially oriented, (relatively) big budget productions, a policy to which he gave the ironic nickname 'Hollywood on the Clyde.' It is important to appreciate what is implied through the use of this term. The appellation McArthur uses here recalls the Third Cinema criticism of Teshome Gabriel, who remarked on an assimilationist tendency in third world film industries wherein they attempt to emulate the aesthetic and industrial model of Hollywood films. The case under discussion in Gabriel's piece was Egyptian attempts at emulating Hollywood practices, which he dubbed 'Hollywood on the Nile' (1989, pp. 31-32). Much of McArthur's argument here, and

in retrospect in *Scotch Reels*, follows closely on the Third Cinema model as a way of conceiving of Scottish cinema. Elsewhere, McArthur has written that despite its First World economic status, Scotland can be understood as being ‘mentally a Third World people’ (1998, p. 109), and this more or less corresponds to the view of Scottish cinema and culture as being underdeveloped which was put forward in the earlier collection.³

To return to these particular articles, for McArthur, the allotment of £130,000 – a substantial portion of the SFPF’s production budget for two fiscal years – to the production of *Prague* showed the folly of pursuing commercially oriented policies. Not only was the film a total failure commercially, not being able to even secure theatrical distribution in the UK, but according to McArthur its biggest disappointment was in terms of its cultural relevance, or lack thereof:

Virtually its only claim to be connected with Scotland (having been shot in Prague largely with French money) is that some of its personnel – producer Christopher Young, producer/director Ian Sellar and actor Alan Cumming – are Scots. [...] *Prague* has about it the petrified feel of a Euro-pudding, connecting with no actually existing society except perhaps that of the European art house. (1994, p. 115)

McArthur then goes on to argue, very much like his position in *Scotch Reels*, that commercially-oriented cinema targeted at the international market necessarily entails stereotypical constructions of Scotland and Scottish people. The historical illustrations of this which McArthur cites include *Whisky Galore!* and *Local Hero*, describing the latter as the ‘locus tragicus’ of a Scottish artist defining their culture within stereotypical discursive positions (1994, p. 119). The case of *Local Hero* in particular, a film scripted and directed by a native Scot, inspired McArthur to write: ‘To offer an axiom to Celtic film-makers: the more your films are consciously aimed at the

international market, the more their conditions of intelligibility will be bound up with regressive discourses about your own culture' (1994, pp. 119-120).

The antidote to the policies which lead to films such as *Prague* or *Local Hero*, according to McArthur, is what he calls 'a poor Celtic cinema.' The key metric in this formulation would be budget size. Big budget cinema, which in a nation as small as Scotland demands an appeal to external markets in order to cover production costs, according to McArthur, is inherently inimical to culturally relevant film-making. Discussing advocates of commercial cinema in Scotland, McArthur says, 'The dismal paradox that the more grandiose their delusions become, the higher they rack up film budgets, the more firmly they proclaim film as a commodity, the more surely they will become mired in regressive discourses about their own country' (1994, p. 121). By restricting the size of budgets, McArthur argued, Scottish film funding bodies would be able to create circumstances which would demand innovation from filmmakers, the sort that auteurs like Robert Bresson, for example, turned to in the face of similarly tight budgets (1994, p. 121). This, combined with educational programs to make aspiring artists more cinematically literate, would, according to McArthur, make for a more culturally and cinematically relevant cinema than was being produced at the time. Such policy suggestions were disputed by a number of figures within the industry⁴ and were ultimately never taken up by the Scottish film establishment, but they are nonetheless reminders of the extent to which economic assumptions about the relationship between markets and artists underpin McArthur's view of Scottish film history.

1.2: Contra McArthur: Defences of the Popular

The views of tartanry and kailyardism as ideologically 'bad' discourses were the subject of pointed criticism in two works on popular British cinema published in the mid-1990s which are of import for my concerns in this chapter: Jeffrey Richards' *Films and British National Identity* (1997) and Pam Cook's *Fashioning the Nation* (1996). Both of these authors criticized what they saw as a disdain for the popular in *Scotch Reels* generally and McArthur's work in particular. Cook argues that McArthur evinced 'cultural elitism and profound unease with his own national identity' (1996, p. 24), and suggested that more profitable study lay in examining the attractiveness of nostalgia rather than condemning it on ideological grounds (1996, p. 26). Commenting on the sensitivities of writers such as McArthur when it comes to such 'bad' representations, Richards begins his section on the representations of Britain's Celtic cultures on film with a jocular piece of advice: 'If you want to reduce a Welsh, Scottish or Irish intellectual to an insensate fury, suggest that his/her country is most accurately represented by *How Green Was My Valley* (John Ford, 1941), *The Quiet Man* (John Ford, 1952) and *Brigadoon*' (1997, p. 176). Richards goes on to examine the vision of each nation as presented in these infamous films as well as the vitriolic critical reactions to each by the intellectual groups named in the joke. In the case of Scotland, this leads him to take issue with McArthur and his 'disapprovingly defined' paradigms of tartanry and kailyardism, saying that the only type of cinema McArthur seems to approve of is one concerned solely with class conflict (1997, pp. 190-192). Tartanry, kailyardism and other discourses, such as clydesidism, according to Richards, act as discourses which allow Scotland to imagine itself in ways which distinguish it from other nations, particularly from England (1997, p. 186). Though both Cook and Richards are thus concerned to point out the ideological prejudices existing in Scottish film study, prejudices which have affected the tone and content of

the historiographies in the field, they do little to address the unproblematic equation Scottish film culture lays out between commercial viability and representational content. In fact, if anything, they reinforce it. By defending the popular, they acknowledge that its content is related to its widespread appeal, in so doing they simply defend what others condemn, leaving the politico-economic basis underlying attacks on the popular uncontested.

1.3: Petrie and the ‘New Scottish Cinema’ I: Aesthetics, Representations and Difference from Britain

The next important cluster of writing on Scottish cinema which is of import to this current discussion was that authored by Duncan Petrie beginning in 1996. In a series of articles (1996, 2000b, 2001 and 2005) as well as two book-length studies (2000a and 2004), Petrie put forward an argument about Scottish cinema history which privileged the upsurge in film-making in the period following the first devolution referendum as the most important epoch in Scottish film history. In so doing, Petrie’s arguments regarding the role of public funding in creating an ‘authentic’ national cinema, as well as the supposed link between what was happening aesthetically in Scottish films and what was happening in Scottish politics have effectively set the agenda for almost all subsequent writing in the field. Here I will be concerned with giving an overview of these arguments, demonstrating how they, despite the ways in which Petrie frames them, continue the preoccupations and assumptions of the *Scotch Reels* view of the relationship between the market and Scottish national culture, and how the historiography presented by Petrie is one which

is oriented towards depicting Scottish cinema as a European cinema, which for Petrie mirrors a larger movement of the nation itself away from Britain and towards Europe.

Before proceeding with this line of analysis, it is important to note that my reading of Petrie's work as essentially in line with that found in *Scotch Reels* is in some ways at odds with how Petrie himself presents his work, especially in *Screening Scotland*. Here, Petrie takes care to distance himself from what he describes as the negativity of his predecessors in the *Scotch Reels* project. Reviewing the existing body of Scottish film criticism at the outset of his study, Petrie calls for a reevaluation of the terms that *Scotch Reels* had set out for the analysis of Scottish cinema in light of criticism directed at the collection for its supposed disdain for the popular. Petrie writes that '[Scottish film] history needs to be re-examined with a sensitivity towards questions of inclusiveness, popularity, pleasure and the complex negotiation of cultural meaning' (2000a, p. 8). This appreciation of the popular allows him to praise films like *Whisky Galore!* and *The Maggie*, saying of the triumph of latter's protagonist MacTaggart over the American businessman Calvin Marshall, 'the role of cinema is to provide a space for such oppositional fantasies' (2000a, p. 45). This defence of the popular holds for other infamous externally produced films such as *Brigadoon* and *Braveheart*, but a double standard is apparent as indigenous films are subject to criticism for reliance on 'inauthentic' discourses in ways that their foreign-based counterparts are not. *Local Hero*, for example, is criticised for the way it supposedly subscribes to the representational discourses and sentimentalism found in *Whisky Galore* and *The Maggie* (2000a, pp. 155-156). This is just one instance in which Petrie adheres to the tendencies and assumptions of *Scotch Reels* and I will be charting more throughout this portion of the chapter.

In *Screening Scotland*. Petrie sought to establish analytical and historiographical frameworks, or traditions, for films with Scottish content to exist within. This account is constructed as a narrative featuring an ideological and aesthetic progression towards what he termed the 'new Scottish cinema,' a movement initiated with the release of *Shallow Grave* (Danny Boyle, 1994), and which gave unprecedented visibility to a national cinema which was breaking dramatically from the representational tendencies of the past. This new epoch, according to Petrie, coincided with the devolutionary movement in Scotland, both of which crested in 1999, the year which saw both the establishment of a devolved Scottish parliament and a record number of films produced in Scotland (2000a, pp. 1 and 222). Such a framework places the two events on the same plane, implying that the opening of the Edinburgh Festival with Lynne Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* (1999) was symbolically equivalent to Scotland becoming an independent nation. This overarching narrative is supported by two interrelated arguments about Scottish films and the Scottish film industry, one of these pertaining to aesthetics and representational tendencies and the other to industry and policy.

Aesthetically, Petrie's account has 'new Scottish cinema' overcome and break from the representational tendencies which characterised older films about Scotland as well as practices and tendencies within mainstream British cinema. To define the 'old' traditions of Scottish representation which 'new Scottish cinema' represents alternatives to, Petrie draws heavily on tartanry, kailyard and Clydesidism, citing Nairn, McArthur and Craig as the experts on these discourses (2000a, pp. 2-5). Writing on some of the prime examples of the new Scottish cinema, Petrie says that they 'served to rework the dominant representational traditions of the past,' moving away from such traditional staples of Scottish films as the rural landscape and small

towns: 'these images,' Petrie tells us, 'have placed a new emphasis on the city as the heart of contemporary Scottish experience' (2000a, p. 217). Tartanry and kailyard are of course the 'dominant representational traditions' referred to here, and they are still posited as discourses which are exportable in the wrong way and which were therefore of little comparative relevance within the national culture that produced them.

In *Contemporary Scottish Fictions* Petrie offers a more explicit prioritizing of the kind of trends in Scottish film production that he sees as being important. To this end, Petrie chooses to 'move past' examinations of tartanry and kailyardism, which he describes as 'mythic structures that were fundamentally regressive, elegiac and symptomatic of a national inferiority complex' (2004, p. 17). The alternative for Petrie is Clydesidism, the discourse seen by McArthur in *Scotch Reels* as having a progressive potential. Petrie argues that the resurgence of such a discourse takes on a pointed significance during the ascent of Thatcherism and the decline of heavy industry in western Scotland (2004, p. 18). In so doing, Petrie follows in the footsteps of *Scotch Reels* by opposing urban, working-class, realist representations to the supposedly ahistorical discourses of tartanry and kailyardism. (In fact, Petrie repeatedly cites Caughie's essay in *Scotch Reels* to argue for the national relevance of Clydeside discourses). Petrie concludes the study, which was concerned with themes and trends within Scottish cultural production such as a penchant for the Gothic, the narrative trope of leaving Scotland, and the recurring image of lost children, by returning to tartanry and kailyardism. Explaining the exclusion of films such as *Braveheart* and *Local Hero* as well as television programmes such as *Monarch of the Glen* from his history of Scottish cultural production during the devolutionary period, Petrie writes:

My main reason for omitting an analysis of such fictions is the sheer familiarity of a critical analysis that is much more effectively elaborated elsewhere, coupled with a desire to move beyond the apparent obsession with these regressive tropes that has blinded many to the more productive achievements and traditions within Scottish cultural expression. [...] What is more important is that alternative cultural expressions and representations are identified, discussed and analysed in order to counter such *market-driven distortions*. (2004, p. 209; emphasis added)

The ‘more important’ history thus excludes the works which are found to utilize ‘regressive tropes’ such as tartanry and kailyard. Furthermore, the important works are depicted by Petrie as ‘counter[ing]’ the regressive representations of the past. This view of Scottish films in particular, which seems to fly in the face of the defence of the popular called for in *Screening Scotland*, demonstrates how *Scotch Reels* ideas remain a latent influence in the writing of Scottish film history

Petrie also presents ‘new Scottish cinema’ as breaking from the kind of filmmaking which is found in mainstream British cinema, and thereby underscoring its political secession from Great Britain. *Screening Scotland* opens by saying that *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* presented a ‘timely riposte to the British cinema’s over-reliance on tasteful period films’ (2000a, p. 1). Similarly, Petrie writes in another piece that new Scottish films represent ‘something distinct from much of the rest of current British cinema’, saying that the ‘prevailing climate’ in British cinema ‘favours broad-based commercialism and the safety of generic and formula-based filmmaking’ seen in heritage films, romantic comedies and proletarian comedies typified by *The Full Monty* (Peter Cattaneo, 1997) and *Billy Elliot* (Stephen Daldry, 2000) (2001, p. 56). That Scottish cinema has not, according to Petrie, followed the same path as that of British cinema is not only indicative of national difference on the part

of Scottish cinema vis-à-vis its counterpart down south, but is also a direct consequence of policy interventions, a point to which I now turn.

1.4: Petrie and ‘New Scottish Cinema’ II: Policy, the Market and Europeanness

The other major argument for Petrie in these pieces is one related to markets and film policy. Before going on to detail the role that Petrie argues policy has played in the ‘new Scottish cinema,’ it is important to appreciate the influence of John Hill’s writings on national cinema on Petrie’s conception of national cinema as well as the role that policy should play in national film culture. In an essay for a collection edited by Petrie, Hill, who was also a contributor to *Scotch Reels*, argues that a British ‘national cinema’, as opposed to a nationally-based film industry, is one that cannot exist without public support. The need in a relatively small cinematic market such as Britain to appeal to export markets is, for Hill, especially inimical to a ‘national cinema’:

The difficulty, of course, is that a nationally specific cinema characterised by questioning and inquiry is not the kind of ‘national cinema’ which is encouraged by the market-place. This is not simply because success in the international market requires the downplaying of national specificity in favour of a spurious ‘universal’ appeal [...] The employment of ‘nationally specific’, but none the less ‘internationally recognisable’, referents in films can be of critical importance to the marketing and international success of a film. Rather, the problem is that the marketing of national specificity for international consumption is likely to encourage the use of the most conventional or readily recognizable markers of nationality and national identity. (1992, p. 17)

Hill then concludes this piece by criticising the then Conservative government’s purely economic view of British cinema and its refusal to engage in any direct or indirect subsidy of the British film industry, citing the protective measures that other

European governments, such as that of West Germany, have taken as the kind of support that can support a 'flourishing national cinema' such as the 'new German cinema' (18).

Like Hill and his *Scotch Reels* predecessors, Petrie holds a view in which the international market is inherently inimical to culturally relevant Scottish cinema and that 'good' policy interventions are those which protect artists from the market. This can be seen, for example, in Petrie's comparison between *The Big Man* (David Leland, 1990) and *Silent Scream* (David Hayman, 1990). Here Petrie remarks that the 'fundamental aesthetic differences' between the films 'can be related to the different economic and institutional context of each production' (2000a, p. 152). In this case, *The Big Man* was privately funded and thus, according to Petrie, faced pressures related to appealing to the international market, pressures which 'undermine[d] its ability to engage with the specificities of the subject matter and to speak to and for a particular kind of social experience' (2000a, p. 153). Regarding *Silent Scream*, Petrie writes that the film 'was produced in line with a cultural rather than a commercial imperative, financed by the BFI, Channel Four and the Scottish Film Production Fund, and *consequently* engages directly with the subjective 'reality' of its subject Larry Winters and is 'much more rooted in a particular cultural milieu' (2000a, p. 153; emphasis added). Public funding is thus conceptualised as protective in nature and such protection is held to be the reasons that one film is better, in national terms, than another. It is also important to note how this argument is made. In a logical manoeuvre familiar from Craig's account of Scottish literature discussed above, Petrie bases his case for market address, and its deleterious effects, completely on a juxtaposition between films and the companies that made them.

Such a conceptualisation of policy as having the ability to protect artists from the market and allow for them to make more culturally relevant films underpins Petrie's historiography of the devolutionary period as a whole. The development of an institutional infrastructure for subsidizing film production in Scotland is the key innovation, in Petrie's accounts, that allowed for the existence of Scottish national cinema, particularly in the 'new Scottish cinema' period. Of the two chapters in *Screening Scotland* that Petrie devotes entirely to the 'new Scottish cinema,' one is dedicated to a chronicle of the development of film institutions in Scotland from the establishment of the Scottish Film Council in 1979 up through to the present day. The suggestion here and throughout Petrie's writing on Scottish cinema is that there is a causal relationship between these two events. Prefacing his account of the 'Scottish cultural renaissance' of the devolutionary period, Petrie notes, 'it is also important to acknowledge the institutional and collective developments that helped give much of this activity a sense of coherence and visibility' (2004a, p. 4). Explaining the international success of Scottish cinema in the 1990s relative to those of the 1980s, Petrie cites the 'key institutional developments that led to the provision of new sources of support for Scottish film production' during this period including Lottery funding and the establishment of a single-unified body for film policy in Scottish Screen (2001, p. 55; see also 2000b, pp. 157-158). Such an overarching historical account serves to reify the prescriptive criticism of McArthur and Hill into a descriptive narrative that positions governmental involvement in cinema as leading to a more culturally relevant national cinema. In other words, this account says that now that there is insulation from the marketplace, Scottish artists no longer need to turn to regressive discourses about their culture and can be content to address the international art cinema market without reaching out to large audiences. This.

according to Petrie, has led to the realization of a 'national cinema' in the sense which Hill described in the British context.

Petrie's analyses of policy, the market and the representational tendencies of Scottish films are brought together to argue that 'new Scottish cinema' is at its core European in nature. The movement's appellation recalls such auteur-driven, European art cinema movements as the new German cinema, Italian neo-realism and the French new wave, all of which are cited by Petrie (and, in the case of new German cinema, Hill [1992, p. 18]) as embodying the progressive potential of policy intervention (1996, p. 93). (Of course, mentioning such movements and the policy instruments that supported them in articles concerned with Scottish cinema, in and of itself, is another instance of such implicit comparisons.) Petrie argues that such a collective will towards supporting cultural self-expression, along with overt usage of art cinema conventions by selected Scottish film-makers, constitutes an element of Europeanness in Scottish film culture (2001, p. 56; 2005, p. 216) which he aligns with the Scottish nation's 'long tradition of friendly relations with Europe' (1996, p. 94). This relationship is then contrasted with British hostility towards Europe, evidenced by the 1995 withdrawal from the Eurimages co-production treaty (1996, p. 94) and the commitment to commercial rather cultural film-making (2001, p. 56). Thus Scottish cinema becomes, in Petrie's accounts, a 'devolved British cinema' (2000a, p. 186) leaning towards Europe, just as he presents the nation itself.

1.5: After Petrie: Current Debates and Scholarship in Scottish Cinema

Recent writings on Scottish cinema have largely continued the assumptions found throughout the history of the field, and have tended to either elaborate on

Petrie's thesis of a devolved Scottish cinema leaning towards Europeaness or qualified it by claiming American independent cinema as the paramount influence on Scottish cinema. These trends are typified by the works of David Martin-Jones (2005a, 2005b), Jonathan Murray (2004, 2005b) and Steve Blandford (2007). In these works, the writers all begin by recapitulating the essence of Petrie's historical arguments about the intervention of institutions in order to contextualise the emergence of Scottish cinema and to varying degrees include the symbolic reading of this emergence as mirroring the Scottish national situation.

Martin-Jones begins an essay on Peter Mullan's film *Orphans* (1999) by arguing, citing Nairn's latest book on devolution *After Britain* (2000), that following the devolution referendum of 1997 there has been a need for Scotland to 'regain its own distinct 'voice' after its 'voiceless' years of 'subordination' within the economic partnership that was Britain' (2005a, p. 227). This is followed by an overview of the industrial situation in Scotland, which posits the establishment of Scottish Screen as the most potentially progressive innovation for supporting indigenous film production. Martin-Jones is less optimistic than Petrie, however, about the degree of freedom this has meant for Scottish film-makers as 'there is still a large financial influence exerted from London' which imperils the creativity of indigenous artists (2005a, p. 227). Such perils are exemplified, for Martin-Jones, by the case of *Orphans*, which faced distribution difficulties after Channel Four's initial decision not to release the film theatrically. Martin-Jones says of this situation: 'there is still a sense of Anglo-centric financial censure at work that can potentially silence [the 'voice' of Scottish cinema]' (2005a, p. 227). By drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minor cinema, and comments made by Mullan himself, Martin-Jones makes two arguments about the film. One is that *Orphans*, which tells the story of four adult

siblings struggling to come to terms with the death of their mother, is a national allegory depicting the death of 'Mother Britain' and is therefore a film which the characters 'renegotiate Scottish identity "After Britain"' (2005a, p. 231). The other is that the film 'mirrors Scotland's search for a post-devolutionary national identity in relation to Europe, through its quoting of various European art cinema aesthetics' (2005a, p. 240).

Similarly in a piece in a dossier in the journal *Screen* edited by Petrie, Martin-Jones argues that two films which are concerned with relationships between English and Scottish characters, *Regeneration* (Gillies Mackinnon, 1997) and *The Last Great Wilderness* (David Mackenzie, 2002), are national allegories depicting England 'learning how to be itself again [after devolving] from Scotland' (2005b, p. 232).

Again, though Martin-Jones doesn't go into as much detail recapitulating the devolutionary institutional developments, he does note that both films are 'part of a new Scottish cinema, developed and part-funded from Scottish sources of finance that had become available in the mid 1990s' (2005b, p. 227). Murray's contribution to the *Screen* dossier likewise begins with the assumption that institutions such as Scottish Screen are responsible for the increased film production in Scotland (2005b, p. 217), but goes on to argue that the institutions are modelled on American, and not European, precedents. Making the by now familiar parallel between the Scottish film industry and Scottish national culture, Murray's argues that this institutional 'Americanness' is mirrored by the ways in which two publicly funded Scottish films, *Gregory's Two Girls* (Bill Forsyth, 1999) and *Ratcatcher*, depict various kinds of meetings between Scottish culture and American culture. This was a conceit put forward by Murray in an earlier piece on Peter Mullan's 2002 film *The Magdalene Sisters* (2004). Here Murray argued the film, despite being considered an emulation of

European art cinema practices. was exemplary of Scottish and Irish cinemas' drawing on Hollywood genres to make films which dealt with 'local' concerns.

Steve Blandford's work on Scottish cinema consists of a chapter in his book-length study of theatre and film in Britain during the devolutionary period, entitled *Film, Drama and the Break-Up of Britain*. As is indicated by this title, Blandford's historiography is one that is heavily influenced by Nairn's accounts of British culture and politics during the devolutionary period. As such, it is perhaps not surprising that Blandford's account of Scottish cinema continues many of the same themes and preoccupations found throughout my overview of the field. Blandford argues at the outset of the study that Scottish artists, and indeed all artists of the devolutionary nations, distance themselves from 'Britishness' and identify themselves culturally with Europe, in spite of widespread British 'suspicion of all things 'European'' (2007, p. 9). Writing specifically about Scottish cinema, Blandford draws on Petrie to argue that institutional interventions are what have empowered Scottish film-makers and created the conditions necessary for a national cinema to flourish (2007, pp. 65-66). And though he breaks with Petrie on certain points (e.g. the work of David Kane is not redeemable as distinctly Scottish [2007, p. 84]; the Loach films are distinct from the rest of Scottish cinema during the period [2007, p. 72]), Blandford ultimately concludes that the overriding trend during the period has been 'the burgeoning of a desire to look beyond the hegemony of 'Britain' and towards Europe (and some cases other world cinemas) that can be traced much further back into Scottish cultural history' (2007, p. 86).

1.6: Problems Within the Field: Policy and Protectionism

What I have hoped to show thus far is that certain notions related to the market, policy and national cinema in Scotland have dominated Scottish cinema studies from its inception and have now become the accepted starting points for research which typically either agrees or disagrees with the larger cultural argument made by Petrie that Scottish cinema is European in nature. What is lacking throughout the history of this field, however, is any investigation of whether or not these assumptions are adequate descriptions of what has transpired over the course of the last twenty-five years. Presenting a causal relationship between the establishment of funding bodies and the emergence of a culturally relevant national cinema can be problematised simply by looking at some of the controversies regarding film subsidy in Britain and by looking at historiographies of one of the national cinemas that is presented as a precedent for 'new Scottish cinema'.

Reading Petrie and those who have built on his work, at least in these pieces, one would think that film subsidy in Scotland and Britain is inherently progressive in its ability to protect artists from the market. But such a view overlooks the considerable controversies surrounding film subsidy in the UK, particularly Lottery funding, which has come in for criticism, and at times scathing attack, from the British press, which has criticised the poor box office performance and the dubious artistic merits of many funded films.⁵ This is not just something that goes on in England and Wales, and Scottish film institutions have not been immune to such criticism (e.g. Adler, 2003; Kerevan, 2001). Academic views on contemporary British film policy present it as commercially, not culturally, minded and indeed as largely hostile to artistic film-making (e.g. Harbord, 2002, pp. 108-114; Miller, 2000). Moreover, Hill's accounts of film policy in Britain (1999, pp. 31-52; 2000b) describe the institutional progression from the BFI Production Board in the late 1970s to

British Screen and eventually the National Lottery as one of decline from a cultural point of view, moving British institutions further and further towards commercially oriented film-making. Such views break sharply from Petrie's positive views of Scottish equivalents. At no point do such writers on British film policy specify that Scotland is any different than the rest of the UK, but this is not something addressed directly by Petrie or other Scottish cinema writers, though the criticism of British cinema's obsession with being commercial (2001, p. 56) is perhaps a veiled reference to such perceptions of British policy. In any case, there is no demonstration by Scottish cinema historians that films were funded with any specific goals in mind, cultural or otherwise.

The problems created by simply juxtaposing production contexts with films that were made under their auspices, and then assuming a connection between the two, can be observed by looking briefly at Thomas Elsaesser's account of the new German cinema. As noted above, this movement has been cited by Petrie (1996, p. 93) and Hill (1992, p. 18), with the latter citing Elsaesser's study specifically, as exemplifying progressive governmental intervention in the cinema. What Elsaesser's account is concerned with showing, however, is that the relationship between government, artists and audiences during this period was far from straightforward. Examining the situation, Elsaesser, citing the comments of German director Alexander Kluge, suggests that the films of the new German cinema were made *in spite* of their governmental patronage, not *because of* it (1989, p. 43), and then goes on to show that new German cinema was a historical moment fraught with all manner of controversies about public funding of the arts, coupled with antagonism and mutual mistrust on the part of artists and the government. Thus, even in what is presented as an ideal instance of government intervention in national cinema production, the

relationship between subsidy and production was not simply one of protecting artists and allowing a national cinema to blossom.

Such blind spots in the field can be traced back to the nation-building project that has long underpinned Scottish film criticism. As noted in the discussion of *Scotch Reels* above, Scottish cinema studies was effectively born out of a desire to intervene in a national political crisis, and took a view of Scottish cinema as underdeveloped due to its subordinate relationship with Britain and America, just as it saw Scotland itself and Scottish culture. Though the collection had its flaws and has been duly criticised for these over the years, it was less problematic as a work of historiography because it was so explicitly a work of prescriptive criticism. As the field has developed, this prescriptiveness and interventionist intent have remained, but the tone of the works has changed so that they are now ostensibly works of descriptive historiography. The problems inherent in this transition can be observed in similar debates in British cinema historiography. Critiquing John Hill's writing on national cinema, Andrew Higson argues that Hill's work is as much about advocating a specific type of film policy as it is concerned with defining what a national cinema is (2000, p. 38).⁶ Whether or not this is a fair criticism of Hill's work, with some rephrasing it is a fair description of the problems in the field I have been concerned with mapping. Scottish cinema historiography is more concerned with putting forward arguments about policy as well as Scottish national identity than it is with accounting for the production and circulation of Scottish films. The selectiveness of such works, the consistent reliance on unscrutinized Marxist assumptions regarding capitalism and culture, and the need to align Scottish cinema with any culture that isn't Britain, have left largely unexplored a number of important issues and particularities of the situation facing Scottish films, their makers and the film culture in general.

Investigating the assumptions identified thus far in this chapter will therefore be my task in this thesis. How have production circumstances affected Scottish films? What has been the relationship between policy and the films produced by Scottish cinema institutions? How have Scottish films weathered markets, particularly international markets? How has Scottish cinema changed over the devolutionary period in light of policy interventions?

Section 2: Methodology and Corpus

Having mapped the terrain of the scholarly field of inquiry in which this thesis will seek to intervene, and having put forward the questions which will guide the thesis, in this section of the chapter I will lay out the ways in which I hope to make that intervention. This means explicating my methodology in two senses. I will first outline the reasons for, as well as the ways in which, I will be analysing the various types of documentary evidence that this thesis draws on as sources. As befits a description of historiographical methodology, this portion of the chapter will also involve describing some of the difficulties inherent in such an enterprise, as well as some of its limitations. I will then give some general reasons for selecting the films I have chosen as my corpus and provide a methodological rationale for selecting six films to stand in for twenty-five years in the life of a national cinema.

2:1: Archival Film Historiography

As Sarah Street notes in her *British Cinema in Documents*, in the age of postmodern scepticism over the use value of historical inquiry, there is now

an even greater responsibility on the historian to scrutinize methodologies, to be explicit about the range of approaches being used in any given interpretation of the past, and to embrace a broad, intertextual conception of the interaction between politics, economics and culture. (2000, p. 1)

The method I will be using to carry out the inquiry in this thesis is a form of historical contextual reconstruction that will draw on a diverse mix of sources including production memorandum, subsidy applications, parliamentary committee reports, original interviews with producers and Lottery panellists, as well as journalistic reviews, promotional materials of various sorts and the film texts themselves. As the exact mix of documents available and analysed varies from case to case, in addition to the standard list of works cited I have included an appendix at the end of the thesis detailing what materials were drawn upon in each of the case study chapters.

What exactly is to be gained by examining these documents and trying to reconstruct these contexts? As a point of methodological departure, I will be drawing on a passage in Toby Miller's critique of British film policy in the 1990s. Here, Miller cites Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's call for cultural policy to replace industrial policy in Britain in light of the crisis of the early 1990s. Miller asks, 'Has this happened? Or are public subsidies being given to support unspecified claims about cultural maintenance, diversity, and development?', his reply to this question: 'Absolute answers depend on textual and audience studies' (2000, p. 38). Miller, it is important to note, does not actually engage in any of the analysis he advocates here, and this is more of a passing comment on his part in what is a general argument against government supporting commercially-oriented film-making. But the point he raises

here is very significant. At some point it is necessary to look back and see what has been accomplished by subsidy programmes. Industry groups and the Film Council have engaged in a great deal of research as to the effect of subsidy on the film industry itself, but there is still a need within film studies to evaluate the cultural outcomes of policy interventions, and this means looking at the films themselves and how they have circulated at home and abroad. What Miller doesn't mention, but which is also vital, is that some sense of intention must also be established. It is not enough to simply say that policy institutions are culturally or commercially minded and leave it at that. As detailed in the literature review portion of this chapter, one of the problems to be found in Scottish cinema historiography is the lack of evidence as to what policy makers were trying to do with their interventions in the film industry along with a lack of clear demonstration of how the films that were produced did or did not correspond to the goals guiding policy decisions. Similarly, it has been an assumption that commercially financed films were compelled into simplistic representations of Scotland and Scottish people by their need to appeal to international audiences. By adopting an approach which simultaneously attempts to establish intended outcomes at the point of production and then measuring those outcomes in terms of the films that were produced and the ways in which they were received at home and abroad, I hope to be able to offer an expansive view of policy and Scottish films that can assess the impact of policy at a number of 'moments' within the life of each film under analysis here.

How is it possible to establish such things as 'intention' at the point of production? To do so I will draw mainly upon a variety of production documents including correspondences between creative personnel, subsidy applications and the minutes corresponding to funding decisions, policy statements and early drafts of

scripts and or source novels for adapted films amongst other things. Each of these types of documents provides some kind of difficulty for the historian, and some reflection on these is necessary in order to clarify exactly how I will proceed in this thesis. Providing an analytical framework for historians carrying out archival research, Street outlines seven methodological considerations to keep in mind for the documents under analysis: type, authorship, agency, context, impact, archival scheme and interpretive significance (2000, pp. 6-9). While I will not be concerned with recapitulating each of these in great detail here, Street's considerations do have a great deal of import for the ways in which I will attempt to establish intentions in production documents. In some cases the work is easier than others, especially when one considers the agency and context from which the materials originate. The materials examined for the *Local Hero* chapter, for example, are fairly straightforward as memos between Forsyth and Puttnam, which were never intended to be viewed by anyone other than the two of them, can be thought of as relatively straightforward expressions of the working communication between the producer and the director. Thus, when Puttnam asks Forsyth to shorten sequences in the film due to concerns regarding pacing, we can take it at more or less face value that Puttnam wanted the film to move more quickly so that audiences wouldn't be bored. This is not to say that there are no complexities to analysing the Puttnam papers, but such complexities are minimal compared to other source materials that I examine in other chapters. Policy documents present an altogether different set of challenges.

Documents such as committee reports and funding applications have complex discursive contexts and it is worth explaining at some length just how I have chosen to approach them. Though she does not analyse the documents which I am specifically concerned with, namely funding applications and decision statements,

Street's general advice to read such materials 'against the grain' could be said to be an overarching methodological guide. One particular passage could be said to be particularly relevant when handling government documents:

Memoranda written by civil servants [...] are typically characterized by a semblance of neutrality and, in the case of film, appear to be disconnected from cultural considerations. [...] However, on closer analysis this is far from the case; many controversial themes or far-reaching policies have been couched in bureaucratic language which conceals deep-seated contradictions and tensions. (2000, p. 6)

The task of the archival researcher is thus to deal with the textuality of their sources in as much, if not more, detail as they deal with other pieces of evidence such as, in the case of this project, the films under consideration. Problems of dealing with bureaucratic discourse are also astutely described by Street when discussing the issue of agency in documentary research. Describing this category of consideration, Street suggests the researcher ask 'Why was [the document] written? What was its purpose?' and reminds us that, 'there is often a 'gap' between a document's ostensible purpose and its *real* purpose' (2000, p. 7). Such an approach entails keeping in mind that the descriptions of the projects in question are not necessarily accurate reflections of how the producers were envisaging the project. In all likelihood the applications were written in such ways as to appeal to the ostensible mandate of the funding body, just as a grantwriter for any fund-raising organization is trained to do. Likewise, the statements by funding committees explaining why they chose to support any given project do not necessarily reflect the actual reasons a project was supported. But in a sense this is what makes them so interesting. Even if members of a committee had an extremely idealistic view of film as art and supported a project simply because they believed in the vision of the artists involved, they would still need to justify that

decision in terms of the constraints of the system in which they work. In such a scenario, the decision minutes would thus still reflect some truths about the system that governs subsidy decisions even if it doesn't reflect the 'actual' reasons a film was granted production subsidies.

As we have seen to be the case with researching production contexts, researching the reception of films also presents a number of methodological problems. But before detailing these and the ways that they apply to my inquiry here, it is necessary to clarify my research goals in this thesis. Despite my citation of Miller's comments on the need for textual and audience research, I would describe my approach to measuring outcomes as a combination of textual and *reception* research. Though I have drawn on audience studies other authors have done, particularly in relation to *PIAM*, I have not undertaken any new work in this area. Rather than empirical audience research, which remains something that needs to be done in relation to public funding in British and Scottish cinema, here I will be more concerned with box office statistics, promotional campaigns and reviews and commentaries found in newspapers and other publications. These materials are not interchangeable with the films' audiences, even in the case of the test screening reports for *Local Hero* discussed in Chapter Two, nor should it be thought that I mean for them to be. Instead what I have sought to do is to give some estimate of the films' commercial success or lack thereof and then to trace the films' fates within the discursive system generally referred to as 'film cultures', what Janet Harbord describes as the 'discursive domains where film as culture is produced' (2002, p. 3), or what Tom O'Regan describes as the 'formations of value' which evaluate filmic products and ultimately feed back into policy debates in nations which have public support for film-making (1996, p. 111). Reception contexts such as these are useful

for examining how films are generally understood by the mechanisms which mediate between actual audiences and those attempting to get them to see the films – in short as records of a film’s ‘word of mouth’ reputation – and are therefore of significant historical use-value even if they are not constitutive of the audience themselves. In so doing I will be using something akin to the ‘historical materialist’ approach to film reception influentially deployed by Janet Staiger (1992, pp. 79-97). By combining such a study of reception with textual analysis and production research, I hope to carry out the kind of national cinema study described by O’Regan in his study of Australian cinema, a kind of analysis that addresses ‘the films, the audience (including the critical audience) for these films, the industry within which they are produced, the local and international markets where they circulate, and the strategic role of government in sustaining domestic productions’ (1996, p. 2), but which also brings such a framework to bear on individual films.

As a way of concluding this section of the chapter, it is important to disclose some of the irreconcilable problems in this thesis, problems which are inherent to the historical method which I have chosen to deploy. To begin with it must be said at the outset that I do not have access to as much material as would be ideal. As literary historian Robert D. Hume has argued, in addition to being explicit about what a historian is drawing on for their arguments, ‘good historical practice requires us to be blunt about what we lack’ (1999, p. 118). Despite my best efforts, I have not been able to obtain all the policy papers I would have liked or talk to as many people involved in the production of the films studied in this thesis as I would have liked. This is a problem inherent in historical research, particularly when it is conducted with limited time and resources, and what I hope to have done is to assemble sufficient material to make a series of original, supportable arguments about the

objects of study and at one and the same time acknowledge that there is still, and likely always will be, more to be done to account for the entirety of what Barbara Klinger calls a film's 'discursive surround' (1997, pp. 108-109).

2.2: Corpus

With such methodological explanations, qualifications and justifications in mind, I will now turn to an overview of my corpus and what I hope to achieve with its selection. To begin with, why only six films? As was seen in the literature review, one of the lacunae in Scottish film histories is the lack of sustained engagement with individual films. Though this has begun to be addressed in the form of case-study works such as McArthur's books on *Brigadoon*, *Braveheart*, *Whisky Galore!* and *The Maggie* (2003a, 2003b), Murray Smith's volume on *Trainspotting* (2002), and the short pieces in the *Screen* dossier, much of what has been written on Scottish cinema is written in the survey format. As important as such a genre of scholarly writing as survey is, and as important as Petrie's surveys of Scottish cinema have been, the format has its limitations and every field needs a balance between intense studies of individual works and sweeping overviews of larger trends. When a field of inquiry has previously gone without substantial inductive studies of individual works there remains a need to look closely at individual works to test the assumptions and generalizations that exist in the survey works that dominate the field, especially when, as we saw in the literature review, surveys such as Petrie's are becoming the 'common sense' of the field. Moreover, even among the book-length case study volumes cited above, there is only one – Smith's – that is concerned with

indigenously produced films, making the necessity for breaking from the survey format in order to discuss Scottish films all that more pressing.

The second problem – how to generate results that are applicable beyond the individual films being studied – is one that requires more explanation. As I claim that I have selected a corpus that will allow me to make more wide-ranging observations, I must explain how I have gone about assembling this corpus. Each case study has its own individual rationale behind it, but by selecting these films I have also had the intention of putting together a composite portrait of the period under consideration. To begin with, the overarching criterion is that all the films have been selected at least in part because they have been too little discussed in Scottish cinema. This may seem surprising in the cases of *Mrs. Brown*, *Morvern Callar* and especially *Local Hero*, as all are in some ways well known Scottish films. But it is precisely because they are so well known without also having been extensively analysed that it was necessary to include them here. *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Young Adam* are less widely discussed, at least academically, and so I hope to have contributed to discussions around what are very historically significant works.

In and of itself, choosing to work on a limited number of films rather than a larger body of work creates some difficulties. Selecting works and creating an argument around them, in short working from a ‘bottom up’ approach, can lead to the perception that the author has ‘stacked the deck’ by only selecting those which fit the argument being put forward. There is no alternative, however, given this thesis’s avowed commitment to intense exploration of individual films, to selecting a limited number of works. To do anything more than this would require much more space (not to mention time and resources) than is possible in a thesis such as this. So while I think that the sort of historical archaeology I perform on each of the films I study

could usefully be performed on every film, Scottish or otherwise. I have had to be considerably more selective here. There was a pragmatic reason that guided some of my selections, in that the method I deploy is dependent on a modicum of access to documents relating to production and reception. This has meant that a number of films I would have liked to include, such as *Ratcatcher* or *The Winter Guest* (Alan Rickman, 1997), had to be left aside because I did not succeed in gaining access to appropriate source materials. This is especially true of films from the 1980s and early 1990s of which little production documentation exists in publicly accessible archives.

This brings me to the problem of what exactly constitutes ‘historical significance’ for this study. I had two main criteria in this regard for selecting the films I have studied here: their dependence on policy instruments for their existence (except in the case of *Local Hero* where the lack of policy is the reason for including it); and their status as having achieved some form of success, be it attracting audiences at home and abroad (*Local Hero*, *Mrs. Brown*, and *Young Adam*, or in the case of *Ae Fond Kiss* abroad), of gaining some kind of critical notoriety from journalistic reviewers and historians, even if the latter group has yet to analyse the films in the fullness that they deserve. I have also attempted to choose films which can be seen to embody the most culturally progressive of policy’s promises such as representing ethnic diversity (*Ae Fond Kiss* and *PIAM*), allowing for greater participation in the film industry for women (*Morvern Callar*), or aiding the development of indigenous artists (*Young Adam* and *Morvern Callar*). Films which can be seen as embodying the culturally important outcomes of re-examining the national past (*Mrs. Brown* and *Young Adam*), utilizing popular genres (*Mrs. Brown* and *Local Hero*) or adapting the national literature (*Morvern Callar* and *Young Adam*) were also sought out. The intersections between these criteria, which I would argue

often shape the priorities of individual national cinema studies even if this is never self-consciously acknowledged by authors of such works. is where I selected my films. The end result in this case is a spectrum of films which encompass what could be termed Scottish *film maudits* (*Local Hero*, *Mrs. Brown* and *PLAM*) as well as films that have been embraced by historians as exemplary of the progressive strands of 'new Scottish cinema' (*Ae Fond Kiss*, *Morvern Callar* and *Young Adam*).

Such a multifarious richness across the corpus will allow me in the thesis's conclusion to make a number of observations and extrapolations which can account for aspects of films not studied here, observations that, like those found in the case studies themselves, supplement, qualify, complicate and contradict some of those currently on offer within Scottish cinema historiography. That being said, while I have attempted to assemble case studies which allow for wider discussion of issues related to Scottish cinema, such a discussion will always in some senses be limited by (but hopefully not to) the films I have chosen. This is regrettable, but no one study can account for everything, not even in a national cinema as small as Scotland's, and I would therefore welcome further work on films and trends not discussed here which may in turn supplement, qualify, complicate and even possibly contradict the findings of this thesis. This after all is part of the communal project inherent in scholarship and it is to future writers that I leave the extended examination of, for example, the numerous important films of the 1980s such as *Another Time, Another Place* (Michael Radford, 1984) or *Venus Peter* (Ian Sellar, 1989), some of the many interesting films from the 1990s and 2000s which either didn't receive the widespread distribution that would have made them more widely known (e.g. *16 Years of Alcohol* [Richard Jobson, 2003] or *The Acid House* [Paul McGuigan, 1999]), or films which have been successful on a number of fronts but for whatever reason (space and or availability of

documentation mainly) couldn't be fitted into this study, such as *The Winter Guest* or *The Last King of Scotland* (Kevin McDonald, 2006).

With all of these qualifications and explanations in mind we can now at last begin to look at the corpus itself, beginning with *Local Hero*.

Chapter 2: Caught Between the Director and the Producer: *Local Hero*, National Representation and Market Forces

Introduction: ‘Raking Over’ *Local Hero* Again

In this chapter I will be concerned with exploring a number of issues surrounding *Local Hero*, including its status as a film made for international consumption, its usage of the discourses of kailyardism, and the role that its producer David Puttnam played in the production and circulation of the film. More so than any of the other films examined in this thesis, and perhaps more so than any film in the history of Scottish cinema, *Local Hero* is a film whose critical reputation is very familiar, so much so that it is now commonplace for more recent writing on Scottish cinema to at some point express the need and the desire to talk about something else besides the film. In his *Contemporary Scottish Fictions*, Petrie says films such as *Local Hero* no longer require critical attention because of ‘the sheer familiarity’ of such analysis, as well as ‘a desire to move beyond the apparent obsession with these regressive tropes that has blinded many to the more productive achievements and traditions within Scottish cultural expression’ (2004, p. 204). Similarly Martin-Jones concludes a report on a conference dedicated to new Scottish cinema by remarking that the event featured scholarship on a variety of forms of Scottish film-making and that the field as a whole had ‘begun to focus more exclusively on the vibrant present, rather than feeling the need to rake over *Whisky Galore!* and *Local Hero* yet again’ (2006b, p. 155).

It is this apparent familiarity that in part motivates this chapter. In spite of *Local Hero*’s entrenched reputation within Scottish cinema studies it remains a film

that has yet to be the object of sustained analysis commensurate with that reputation. Here I will look to seek to remedy this gap in the field and in so doing show that there is much to be gained by ‘raking over’ the film once again. I will begin this chapter by analysing the place that the film holds amongst Scottish cinema critics, focusing on the low esteem in which they hold it, a view based on the way it represents Scotland as well as the commercial pressures that have long been described as influencing that representation. I will then offer my own commentary on the film in which I argue that it is a much more self-aware and complex satirical work than it has been made out to be by those reading the film in ideological terms. Then, using production documents from David Puttnam’s files, I will attempt to illuminate the film’s development in relation to international commercial pressures. Since so much critical derision is predicated on the film’s position as an exportable commodity, there will also be some consideration of the way that commodity has been presented for consumption through the film’s marketing and promotion. By looking more closely at the film’s production and circulation, I will seek to offer fresh insights into the relationship between director and producer in the case of *Local Hero*, a set of insights that will begin the overall process of exploring the industrial position of Scottish cinema as a whole during the contemporary period, a task that forms the core of this thesis. Within the context of this larger project, this case study will serve two further purposes in addition to the main one described above: to act as a ‘control’ case study in which the effects of market forces are documented in counteropposition to what is implicitly claimed to be the market protection offered by the policy instruments found in subsequent case studies; and secondly to demonstrate the importance of close textual and contextual analysis of individual films for lending new perspectives to the accounts and debates which characterize Scottish cinema historiography.

Section 1: *Local Hero* and Its Critics

1.1 Scottish Cinema Historiography and the Infamy of *Local Hero*

If one didn't already know, one would have little difficulty in guessing that [*Local Hero*] was Bill Forsyth's first venture into the big time from the way his script has been broadened for commercial consumption. (Milne, 1982, pp. 87-88)

That Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero* features a commercially motivated, clichéd representation of Scotland has become an entrenched view among British and Scottish cinema scholars. Writings from the seminal *Scotch Reels* collection to the latest works on Scottish cultural production have presented the film as a moment in which Forsyth, despite his promise as an emerging indigenous talent, succumbed to the worst kinds of regressive discourses of Scottish cultural representation. For many of these critics, the fact that this project was Forsyth's first intended for an international audience was not a coincidence and the film has become an example *par excellence* of the necessity of subsidy systems for film production in Scotland. If properly managed such systems, it has been argued, would shield film-makers from the demands of the marketplace and therefore keep them from following *Local Hero*'s lead and resorting to cultural stereotyping as a way of making their work intelligible to larger markets.

While it was in production, *Local Hero* was one of the most anticipated British films of its time. Bill Forsyth, following the surprise success of his first two features *That Sinking Feeling* (1979) and *Gregory's Girl* (1981), was seen as a rising star on the British scene and the first Scottish director of an international calibre. He now had the backing of the emerging British production company Goldcrest Pictures, was allotted a relatively rich budget of £2.5 million, and was now working with David

Puttnam, the producer of the surprise hit *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981). But before the film was even released some were voicing concerns over the ways the project would represent Scotland. Writing in his 'The Iniquity of the Fathers' essay in *Scotch Reels*, McArthur articulated some of these fears:

As this essay is being written a newspaper announces that Bill Forsyth's next project will be a big-budget, international film. One's spirits rise: here is a gifted Scottish film-maker whose two feature films [...] have decidedly eschewed Tartanry/Kailyard and deployed discourses which are not maudlin but which relate to aspects of the lived experience of contemporary Scots. However, as one reads on a cold chill begins to come over the heart: the story will be set in the Highlands; it will be about the impact of off-shore oil; and Burt Lancaster will play the president of a multinational oil company. One tries to blot out memories of *The Maggie*, but they will not go away. (1982b, p. 66)

In the 'Poor Celtic Cinema' essay, McArthur let it be known that his fears had been, in his view, well founded. Arguing that the film bowed too much to the marketplace, he called it 'ideologically equivalent' to films like *The Maggie* (Alexander Mackendrick, 1954) and *Brigadoon* (Vincente Minelli, 1954) (1994, p. 119). McArthur then goes on to describe the film as the 'locus tragicus' of a native Scottish artist coming 'to live within the discursive categories fashioned by the oppressor' (1994, p. 119). McArthur traces what he sees as Forsyth's usage of culturally denigrating discourses to the specific industrial conditions surrounding *Local Hero*, using the film to illustrate the passage cited in the previous chapter: 'To offer an axiom to Celtic film-makers: the more your films are consciously aimed at an international market, the more their conditions of intelligibility will be bound up with regressive discourses about your own culture' (1994, pp. 119-120).

Writing in 2003, McArthur reiterates these views on *Local Hero* in his twin studies *Whisky Galore! & The Maggie* (2003a) and *Brigadoon, Braveheart and the*

Scots (2003b). In these works, McArthur elaborates upon his views on what he sees as a group of films which show the tendency (which he terms the ‘Scottish Discursive Unconscious’) to represent Scotland and Scottish people in the regressive terms of tartanry and kailyardism. The four eponymous films and others, such as *Local Hero*, represent Scotland, particularly Highland Scotland, as being outside of ‘‘the ‘real’ world of politics and economics’’ (2003a, p. 77). None of these films, he says, attempt to show the economic vulnerability of the Highlands in the context of global capitalism but instead depict the area as a bucolic paradise full of people living in blissful ignorance of the workings of the world.

Petrie takes a similar view on *Local Hero* to that expressed by McArthur. While recognizing more complexity in the film than is generally granted, Petrie argues that the film’s ‘externally constructed romantic vision of Scotland [...] serves to overpower the additional theme of existential loneliness and isolation associated with the character of MacIntyre’ as well as overshadowing several significant departures from the narrative conventions of what have become known as kailyardic films (2000a, pp. 155-156). In other words, there may in fact be more to the film than simple provincial comedy but, in the final analysis these other themes are outweighed by the regressive tropes that Petrie finds in the film.

Petrie adds ideological and historical dimensions to this reading of the film in his *Contemporary Scottish Fictions*. Here Petrie characterizes the film as a step backwards in an otherwise exciting, progressive epoch in the history of Scottish cultural production. Contextualizing the film within Forsyth’s early output, which Petrie considers to be part of the ‘Scottish Cultural Revival’ of the early 1980s, he calls *Local Hero* ‘a temporary retreat into a more stereotypical representation [of Scotland] for mass consumption’ (2004, p. 61). The film is excluded from Petrie’s

section on Forsyth's early work, which is presented alongside the novels of James Kelman and Alasdair Gray as well as the television work of John Byrne. because Petrie is concerned with works which he feels show 'a creative engagement with contemporary experience' in 1980s Scotland (2004, p. 61). In other words, *Local Hero* is implicitly characterized as a film that exists outside the domain of 'important' history because it offers no reflection on the life of Scots during this period. It is thus not altogether surprising that in concluding his study, Petrie counts the film amongst the 'market-driven distortions' which he excluded from his history of the period (2004, p. 209).

1.2 *Local Hero*'s Defenders

Before offering my own textual reading of the film, I should point out that *Local Hero* has not been without defenders. Allan Hunter, who has been one of Forsyth's most stalwart supporters and co-wrote a promotional book on the the film while it was in production (1983), has long voiced a need to see more than comedy in the director's universe, pointing out the darker themes of alienation, loneliness and human cruelty lurking beneath the surface of its apparently genial comedy. Writing on such instances in *Local Hero*, Hunter describes Mac as 'a man who doubts the validity of his own apparently bleak lifestyle' when he comes to Ferness (1991, p. 157). He also points to the very serious threat of physical violence in the villagers' visit to Ben before Happer's arrival on the beach (1991, p. 158). While Hunter's characterization of Forsyth's style is welcome for adducing a greater tonal range within his oeuvre than was widely assumed, it doesn't address the issues of Scottish representation which have dogged the film since before its completion. Moreover,

Petrie takes Hunter's qualifications on board and argues that the problems of national cultural representation overshadow any other themes.

In two pieces published around the time of the film's release, John Brown offered the most insightful and articulate defence of the film to date (1983, 1984). Prefacing an interview with Forsyth about his career up to and including *Local Hero*, Brown writes that

Local Hero has attracted some adverse criticism for its representation of the Scots, perhaps because [its] pervasive irony has been overlooked. The assumption behind the criticism seems to be that Forsyth has naively fallen into the traditionalist trap of the *Whisky Galore!* syndrome, in which the quaint Highland oddballs, in touch with natural mystical verities, casually outwit the representatives of the unnatural modern world; whereas in truth, this reading would claim, the modern world has ruthlessly exploited and colonised the Highlands. (1983, p. 158)

Brown, within the confines of his preface, gives the example of the villagers' all too willing compliance in their 'exploitation' as just one example of the distinction between *Local Hero* and the antecedents suggested by critics. Commenting on the negative critical views on the film, Brown writes that 'if one speed-reads the film, there are enough bits and pieces of plot and character to encourage the view that, for all of Bill Forsyth's wit and skill, the Anglo-American movie machine has done it to us again', but, Brown writes, 'on closer examination, a dense pattern of themes and variants, full of intricate correspondences and rhymes' emerges, one that has as its aim the 'unsystematic subversion of the *Whisky Galore* syndrome' (1984, pp. 41-42).

Section 2: *Local Hero* Revisited

Brown's contemporary defences of the film have over the last twenty-five years become a distinctly minority viewpoint in Scottish film criticism, being

overtaken by the mass of negative readings described above. I will now take up his insight into the comic style of the film and expand it to show that *Local Hero* is a complex film that does in fact deal with the political and economic conditions facing rural Scotland in the early 1980s. Furthermore, I will show that the film is quite aware of ‘the *Whisky Galore!* syndrome’ and plays with the trappings of these films, subverting them at times, even if it doesn’t undermine them altogether. Rather than arguing that the film either subverts or upholds the ideologies which are said to be inherent in tartanry and kailyardism, what I will seek to argue is that the film has the sort of dual address that others have found in later Scottish works such as the television series *Hamish Macbeth*. I will then argue that this dual address is indicative of the film’s attempts to balance conventions of art cinema and popular cinema, a balance that will be at the heart of its industrial position which I will detail later in the chapter.

2.1: ‘Pervasive Irony’ in *Local Hero*

All commentators on *Local Hero*, and Forsyth’s work in general, have recognized the paramount importance of irony in both, but not all of these commentators have appreciated the depth and complexity of this irony. Brown comes closest to doing so but his short piece leaves the film’s ironic machinations largely unilluminated. The most widely mentioned instance of ironic inversion in the film is the villagers’ readiness to cash in on the ecological exploitation of Ferness. This is one of the more obvious instances of the deflation of expectation in the film and is mentioned by nearly everyone who comments upon it, but briefly revisiting it can help to both appreciate the multiple levels of humour contained within this joke and

recognize the structuring principles of Forsyth's humour throughout the film. The more obvious layer of the joke is on the audience. Having been given the premise that an oil company is looking to buy up a small town in a remote area of beautiful countryside, audience expectation would be that they are in for an environmentally conscious film in which the villagers would attempt to defend their ecological paradise from the threat of industrial exploitation. In such a narrative, the villagers would invoke the sentimental commonplace that some things, such as their homes, were more important than money. The inhabitants of the Ferness, of course, do not hold such a position and the audience is reminded of this throughout the film, from the moment Gordon (Dennis Lawson) dances on his desk at the thought of getting rich, to the moment when Ben (Fulton MacKay) invokes the position that his home is more valuable than money and the villagers ominously descend on his shack. So on one level we can say that ironic humour ensues from deflation of audience expectation. But another level of humour is seen in the village-wide conspiracy to conceal the widespread knowledge of Mac's purpose in the town. For those looking to align the film with *Whisky Galore!* or other tales of small-town trickery, such as the Welsh film *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain* (Christopher Monger, 1995), this is an instance in which the locals seek to, as Brown puts it, 'casually outwit the representatives of the unnatural modern world' (1983, p. 158).

But it is important to appreciate what the respective villagers' deceptions are meant to accomplish. In the case of *Englishman*, which Martin McLoone describes as Welsh 'kailyardism' (2001, p. 187), the mass deception involves keeping the English cartographer George (Ian MacNeice) and his assistant Anson (Hugh Grant) in town long enough for them to build a mound atop their local mountain in order to make it

high enough to qualify as an official mountain. They sabotage the cartographers' automobile, lie about the local train service, ply them with liquor and women, all to keep them from leaving until they finish the construction of the mound. Throughout this ruse George becomes increasingly irritated and on more than one occasion is heard voicing his mistrust of the Welsh, suspecting them of purposely obstructing their work. In contrast, the villagers in *Local Hero* deceive Mac into believing that they are simple, honest folk, precisely the type one would find in kailyardic fiction. By doing so they hope to be able to negotiate a better deal. They must sneak out of the church without Mac seeing them so that he remains unaware of their awareness of who he is and why he is there. Put more simply, in order to maximize their profit from the deal they collectively play 'the picturesque morons' that Nairn saw at the heart of the kailyardic narrative (1981, p. 157) and that they expect Mac to be expecting. The double-sided ironic nature of this joke is emblematic of the film's overall comic strategy. This strategy allows the film to be entertaining and humourous, but still to have a satirical edge which, among other things, allows it to engage with politics and economics.

2.2: Contextualizing *Local Hero*: History in Comedy

As described above, McArthur has criticized the film's depiction of the village as existing outside of 'the "real" world of politics and economics' (2003a, p. 77).

Michie likewise places the film within the context of representations that present 'the isolated community, shut off from "reality", detached from history' (1986, p. 258). By excluding the film from his study of Scottish fictions which reflect upon the Scottish condition during the Thatcher years, Petrie implicitly echoes these sentiments. Such

assessments overlook many of the film's pointedly satirical elements. *Local Hero* is actually very much a film of its time, and the village of Ferness is anything but an isolated community set apart from the world of 'politics and economics.'

Reaganite/Thatcherite corporate capitalism is the narrative's catalyst and Mac is in many ways the epitome of the 'yuppie', the social class which became synonymous with the decade. British economic and political complicity with America during this period likewise is apparent in the film. Early in the film Happer's (Burt Lancaster) secretary (Karen Douglas) is overheard connecting a call from a female Prime Minister, a thinly-veiled reference to Margaret Thatcher. Forsyth takes this opportunity to poke fun at Thatcher's 'Iron Lady' persona when the secretary chats with the Prime Minister regarding a dessert recipe they shared. However brief this joke is, it nonetheless lampoons the close relationship between the British government of the time and American big business.

The presence of the British government in the film does not end here. The occasional flyovers by fighter jets punctuating the film's action remind the audience that the Highlands are not untouched by the militarism that marked the Cold War era generally, and Thatcher's administration in particular. The fact that these jets sometimes test their weapons near enough to Ferness so that the clouds from the explosions are visible shows that the British government is also using the remote Highland landscape for its own purposes, though without offering to compensate the locals. Keeping with the film's overall ironic tenor, Mac at one point comments on these training exercises by saying that they 'spoil a pretty nice country', seemingly blind to the irony of these words coming from the representative of a major oil company intent on buying up and destroying that 'nice country.'

The occasional appearance of the 'real' world's tools of mass destruction speak not only to Thatcherite militarism but also to the Cold War which provided the excuse for much of that militarism. Forsyth also draws on this aspect of the film's historical context. One of the film's most memorable characters is Victor (Christopher Rozycki), a sailor from the Soviet Union who comes to town to attend the local ceilidh and to check up on his investments, which are being managed by Gordon. Together with the town's African minister Reverend Macpherson (Gyearbuor Asante), Victor reminds us that Ferness is not an isolated town cut off from the outside world, but is instead 'globalized' in its own way. Victor's presence in the film also allows for a number of jokes on Cold War-era international relations. When she hears Victor announcing his visit, the local shopkeeper (Ann Scott-Jones) tells Roddy (Tam Dean Burn) to tell Gordon that 'the Russians are coming'. Victor's sophisticated financial arrangements with Gordon undercut the idea that all Soviet citizens are ideologically homogenous socialists.⁷ In fact, Victor seems to be the most unscrupulously capitalist person in Ferness, as he suggests at one point that Gordon sell the beach to Mac without telling Ben, and checks with Ben to make sure that he has a deed for it. When Victor takes the stage at the ceilidh, he performs a rollicking version of 'Lone Star Man', an American country and western song.

Such jokes come at the expense of preconceived notions of national identity. Forsyth inverts Victor and Mac to the point that nearly everything that Victor does one would always think to be more typical of a young American oil executive rather than a citizen of the Soviet Union. This inversion of national identity becomes another of the film's recurring jokes. Mac is selected for the trip in part because of his supposed Scottish heritage, although we later find out he is actually of Hungarian descent and that his parents chose the name MacIntyre because it sounded American.

The joke of supposed Scottish heritage recurs when Happer explains the ‘close historical relationship’ that Knox Oil has: it was founded by a Scot who was later bought out by Happer’s father who didn’t bother to change the name of the company. This play with cultural identity is central to *Local Hero*’s comedy as can be seen in its most controversial facet, its representation of Scotland and Scots.

2.3: *Local Hero* and Scottish National Representation

In commenting on Ealing’s representations of Scotland, Michie argues that films such as *Whisky Galore!*, and implicitly *Local Hero*, utilize the isolated village to stand in for the nation as a whole. In making this point he cites Charles Barr on Ealing: ‘One “village” stands for a city, a nation, of interlocking communities, just as a small detachment of firefighters stands for a nationwide service’ (1986, p. 259). Regardless of whether one agrees with this reading of Ealing films, we must ask if it necessarily applies to *Local Hero*. The film can be seen as making a distinction between the village of Ferness and the nation of Scotland. It is surely the case that Mac falls in love with the elemental beauty of the Highlands, the likes of which he has never seen before; but this statement is also true of his Aberdonian assistant Danny (Peter Capaldi). In fact there are several moments interspersed throughout the film to remind us that Danny is just as much an outsider to Ferness as is Mac. He is just as horrified by the thought of eating the rabbit they run over as Mac is, a moral compunction not shared by the Highlanders. Although he can speak and read a number of different languages, he cannot make sense of the road signs near Ferness, which are printed in Gaelic. An exchange from the ceilidh sequence which foregrounds Danny’s status as outsider takes place during an argument between the

punk girl (Caroline Guthrie) and her boyfriend (John Gordon Sinclair). Confronting her about her chasing Danny all over the dance floor, the boyfriend asks, 'And what's so special about him?' her response is 'He's different' to which the boyfriend dismissively says 'Bloody right he's different.' These jokes have the combined effect of showing that not all Scots are Highland villagers, or middle-class organization men for that matter, and consequently problematize a reading of the village and its inhabitants as standing in for Scotland. While there is perhaps more to say about the way the film is playing on the historical distinction between Highland and Lowland Scots and Scottishness, for my present purposes it is more important to realize that the film presents neither as representative of the national culture and thereby is purposely eschewing any monolithic conception of the nation and its people.

In a similar vein, the villagers are depicted as being very aware of the exoticness of their home. As I have touched upon previously, the villagers are quite aware of the expectations visiting outsiders will have and follow Gordon's lead in helping to give the impression that they are unaware of any deal. They also are aware of the Highland landscape as a powerful bargaining chip. Before beginning the negotiations in earnest, Gordon urges Mac and Danny to 'take in the beach, relax for a while, it's a beautiful place.' Gordon here pushes the two towards the town's 'tartan exteriors', to use McArthur's phrase (1982b, p. 41), and suggests that they take advantage of the town's distance from the pressures of corporate life, perhaps anticipating the allure that such a simple life will ultimately have for Mac. Eventually these charms overwhelm Mac's negotiation skills to the point that Gordon finds it almost too easy to haggle with him. The calculated tactic of using the town's romantic landscapes and convincing Mac of the naive simplicity of its inhabitant proves very effective indeed.

As is the case with all of *Local Hero*'s jokes, there are multiple levels of irony attached to this idea of selling tartanry and kailyardism in the film. On one level it is a way for the village to leverage better terms from Mac. On another it is a pointed comment on the economic condition of those living in the Highlands that the villagers are so invested in presenting themselves in stereotypical ways. Brown argues that the film does not 'dodge' the 'socio-economic' realities of remote village life (1984, p. 43), and it is important to appreciate this aspect of the film as it is at odds with the picture presented by most subsequent Scottish criticism of the film. Though there is no extensive treatment of the actual economic challenges facing the villagers, there are several moments in the film to remind us that life in small Highland villages is not as idyllic as one may think. In a very pointed joke about the realities of global trade, Roddy, the local lobster trapper, tells Mac he doesn't eat what he catches because it is too expensive. Later, Victor tries to allay any doubts Mac has about buying up the town, on one occasion saying, 'I like it here, but it is a tough life for the locals. You should be proud of yourself, making them all millionaires.' And on another occasion, he explains: 'It's their place, Mac. They have a right to make what they can of it. You can't eat scenery.' This last comment from Victor is an especially poignant reminder that the beauty of the area notwithstanding, life in a coastal village is very difficult and that poverty is often a part of life for those in remote areas of natural beauty.

2.4: The '*Whisky Galore!* Syndrome': Intertextual Strategies in *Local Hero*

Questions of national representation in *Local Hero* invariably lead one to the group of films to which the film is always compared, and has been described as imitating. Brown has aptly termed this discursive context 'the *Whisky Galore!*

syndrome' (1983, p. 158) as critics have consistently named *Whisky Galore!*, *The Maggie* and *Brigadoon*, as the specific films being imitated. But this aspect of the film is also not as straightforward as has been described by the film's critics. Just as the villagers of Ferness consciously manufacture a certain image of themselves and direct Mac and Danny towards the more romantic areas of the town, so does Forsyth consciously deploy many of the clichéd signifiers associated with 'the *Whisky Galore!* syndrome.' Throughout the film, Forsyth is concerned with poking fun at the illusory nature of such representations of Scotland.

The use of the Highland mists is a good example of such a usage. When Danny and Mac embark on the trip from Aberdeen to Ferness their trip is delayed by a thick fog which causes them to run over a rabbit and forces them to pull over and wait for the fog to clear. They have to wait overnight, but once the fog does clear they move along to Ferness and a world wholly set apart from that of Houston or Aberdeen. The intertextual reference here is, of course, to the mists of *Brigadoon* which precede the appearance of the magical town which happens only once every one hundred years. Writing about the use of the mists in *Brigadoon* and throughout films set in the Highlands, Michie notes that they serve to dislocate the small Scottish community from the rest of the 'real' world and provide a convenient type of 'dream dissolve' between those two worlds (1986, p. 258). The mists in *Local Hero* do demarcate the boundaries between two different worlds (within Scotland it should be remembered), but their deployment is anything but mystical and wonderful. In fact the humour in the scene derives from the mundane nuances of a supposedly dream-like moment. It forces the two men into a somewhat awkward night sleeping in the car with the rabbit they have injured, eating chocolate and chewing gum while Danny begins to irritate Mac with his skill for languages. When the pair awake and the mists

have cleared they are not overawed by their surroundings and there is a moment of surreal comedy as Mac does some early morning calisthenics which seem weirdly artificial against the backdrop of the Highland landscape. The combination in this scene of the traditional usage of the mists to demarcate the boundary between two worlds with a joke about the lack of wonder in this particular moment is one of many instances in the film of the simultaneous usage of traditional iconography and ironic commentary on such iconography.

2.5: 'Going Native' in *Local Hero*

Another element of so-called kailyardic narratives that the film appropriates is the motif in which the outsider-figure 'goes native'. The film conveys this through a character arc over the course of which Mac gradually sheds the trappings of American corporate culture and begins to blend into the village's way of life. This is compared unfavourably by many to a similar character trajectory in *The Maggie*. In this film an American businessman Calvin Marshall (Paul Douglas) is the victim of multiple tricks and ruses at the hands of the crew of the eponymous Clyde puffer.⁸ As the crew keep diverting Marshall all over the Highland coast to pick up passengers and go to a ceilidh, he slowly comes to understand the values of the simple folk he meets and finally shows his allegiance with the crew of the ship by agreeing to pay for the repairs required to keep the vessel sailing. A crucial scene in the film takes place at the ceilidh which the crew tricks Marshall into attending. Here Marshall meets a beautiful young woman who explains that, given the choice between a rich suitor and a poor one, she would rather marry the latter as he would always be thinking of her and not his money. Noticing a close parallel to his own treatment of his wife,

Marshall sees the error of his ways, setting the stage for his ultimate conversion. Though it still takes a knock on the head to get to that point, the ceilidh scene is nonetheless pivotal, as it foregrounds the nobility of Highlanders in contrast to the American businessman.⁹ The process of 'going native' in *The Maggie* is underscored by Marshall's change in costume. Just before he goes to the ceilidh he runs out of business suits and buys a thickly knit turtleneck sweater in a local store and by the end of the ceilidh he is visually indistinguishable from the villagers.

This pattern of integration into the Highland community is repeated with some variations in *Brigadoon* and *Whisky Galore!* and is typically symbolically rendered through the marriage of the outsider figure to a local girl. In *Brigadoon*, Tommy (Gene Kelly) is convinced to stay in Brigadoon and marry Fiona (Cyd Charisse) during the course of her sister's wedding celebrations. In *Whisky Galore!* the English soldier Sergeant Odd (Bruce Seton) is integrated into the community through his assistance in the plunder of the ship and his marriage to local girl Peggy Macroon (Joan Greenwood). Even Marshall's change in *The Maggie* has been described as a marriage by Michie who describes the renaming of 'The Maggie' as 'The Calvin B. Marshall' as a symbolic wedding (1986, p. 261). In each scenario, nation is equated with gender with passive Scottish female characters becoming the object of desire that in part motivates the outsiders to 'go native'.

A similar transition takes place in *Local Hero*. As Mac gradually comes to appreciate the beauty of the village and the tranquility of its lifestyle, his costume gradually transforms into a thick knitted turtleneck sweater, culminating at the ceilidh when Stella gets him to take off his blazer, the last remnant of the suit he arrived in. At another point in the film, Mac gradually leaves his wristwatch, with its timer set to conference time in Houston, in the surf, symbolically abdicating his life in the

metropolis. Like Marshall, Mac has a drunken epiphany at the ceilidh and half seriously offers to trade lives with Gordon, taking Gordon's wife in exchange for Mac's salary and '\$50,000 in mixed securities'. Crucially, the narrative of *Local Hero*, though it flirts with such a resolution, never arrives at the conclusion of its traditional counterparts. As Petrie points out, Mac 'unlike his predecessors in the genre, fails to cement his relationship to the magical environment by winning the girl, a theme crystallized in the relatively downbeat and somewhat unresolved ending with Mac back home in Texas pondering the superficiality of his materialistic existence' (2000, p. 156). The village in *Local Hero* proves to not be a magical place of escape after all and Forsyth makes a point of reminding us that Mac can never actually 'go native'. When Happer orders him back to Houston, he takes a look at the appearance of his employee and tells him to get a shave, undercutting and ridiculing the relaxed look Mac has cultivated in the laid back confines of Ferness as Happer brings Mac's stay there to an abrupt end.

2.6: 'Tartan Exteriors': Landscape and National Representation in *Local Hero*

Commenting on the various contraventions of generic practices in *Local Hero*, Petrie argues that they fail to outweigh the tartan and kailyardic dimensions of the film. Acknowledging the novelty of having the villagers so eager to sell out to the oil company, he writes that 'despite this twist, ultimately the film conforms to the established tradition in terms of a reliance on the romantic and elemental appeal of the beauty and remoteness of the landscape' (2000a, p. 155). Later, in discussing the film's melancholic ending he writes that 'even this coda assumes the form of sentimental longing, stimulated by a romantic encounter with an idealised vision of

Scotland' (2000a, p. 156). These comments bring me to the final aspect of the film that I would like to discuss, that being the ways in which it utilizes the Highland landscape.

As with other motifs of this group of films set in remote parts of Scotland, *Local Hero* makes landscape photography one of its main attractions, but just as it does with the portrayal of small-town folk and the process of 'going native', *Local Hero* uses romantic vistas in more innovative ways than is typically seen in 'the *Whisky Galore!* syndrome' films. The first image of the village that we see shows us that Forsyth is aware of the artificial nature of the film's village. In a sly Brechtian stroke, Forsyth jumps from Danny and Mac at the airport to what appears to be a landscape shot of the town. A sound on the audio track seems to be that of crickets chirping as the camera hovers over an impossibly green bay with waves lapping the shore. The shot holds for several seconds, a time span short enough to keep some viewers from realizing that this is a model of Ferness and not the actual town, before we hear a voice telling Mac and Danny to close the door to the laboratory, making the audience aware that this is in fact a model. As brief as the shot is, it nonetheless has the effect of reminding the viewer that what they are seeing is after all a constructed image. This is also possibly a subtle reference to the making of *Brigadoon*, wherein MGM head Louis Freed famously found the Highlands to be not Scottish enough for his purposes and decided to film the picture on a Hollywood soundstage instead.¹⁰ Forsyth turns this sense of the artificial construction of the Highland village into a running joke as the scientists at the lab tell Mac to "hold Ferness for a minute" and then make a gift of the model to Mac, who takes it with him on his trip.¹¹

There is, however, a great deal of more earnestly traditional deployment of landscape photography in the film, usually accompanied by swelling chords from

Mark Knopfler's score. These shots typically originate from Mac or Danny's point of view and are coupled with comments from one of them relating to the beauty of the landscape and/or the beach. The film does not offer an alternative view of Scotland to balance out the rural vistas visible in the film. It does however feature a Scottish character who is just as enthralled as Mac by those vistas. As I previously argued, Danny's presence in the film, among other things, reminds us that urban Scots are as mystified by the beauty of the Highlands as foreign nationals are. Furthermore the film stops short of ever suggesting a conflation of Ferness and its surrounding areas and Scotland. Again, *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain* provides a useful comparison. *Englishman* is a film that makes such a thematic connection and a look at how it does so demonstrates the extent to which *Local Hero* stops short of making such a connection. The voice-over narration in *Englishman* repeatedly describes landscape and the elements as the essence of Wales, rhapsodizing on the mountains and the rain that have historically protected the country from outsiders and have become synonymous with national culture. The film's story revolves around the pride the town takes in its 'mountain' and the threat of it being judged a hill finally becomes in the eyes of the villagers another instance of the English taking away part of the Welsh cultural heritage. The schoolmaster who bets against the hill being the proper height is ridiculed by the townsfolk for being 'too English'. Along with the schoolmaster, the boorish English cartographer is constructed as the 'other' and spends most of his time drinking by himself while his assistant 'goes native' and marries a local woman. In *Englishman*, the village and the landscape are Wales.

Local Hero does nothing like this. The only instance one could point to in drawing such an explicit thematic parallel would be the Knox Oil board meeting at

which the executives begin discussing ‘the acquisition of Scotland’ – but this moment could also be seen as a jab at the cultural ignorance of American business. The film instead uses the sentimental pull of environmentalism, not Scottish nationalism, as the discourse aligning audience sympathy with the defeat of the refinery project.

Explaining his reluctance to sell the beach, Ben expresses fears about the destruction of the local ecosystem and makes no mention of Scotland or freedom from the intervention of outsiders as Mel Gibson’s William Wallace may have.

2.7: Not Simple Kailyardism: Pastiche and Art Cinema in *Local Hero*

I have been attempting to argue throughout this section of the chapter that the multi-layered irony deployed throughout the film has meant that there is more to the film than just a rehashing of the cinematic conventions associated with tartanry and kailyardism, and that the ideological and national orientation of many Scottish critics of the film has meant that this aspect of the film has gone unexplored. But it is also important to acknowledge that at the same time the film does not altogether discard these conventions either. The landscapes are beautiful, the villagers are odd-balls and life in the village is presented as altogether more simple and appealing than life in Houston. What gets lost, however, when one is only concerned with ideologically-charged national representation in the film is that the film is not simply another kailyardic work. Discussing the mid-1990s television drama *Hamish Macbeth*, Jane Sillars argues that the programme uses a strategy which allows it to both reproduce the tendencies, and associated pleasures, of kailyardism while simultaneously ‘ironically framing these stereotypes’ (1999, p. 251). In so doing the programme, according to Sillars, ‘addresses a local audience as in on the joke’ (1999, p. 251).

As I have argued throughout this chapter, similar things can be said about *Local Hero*,¹² though without limiting the informed portion of the audience to those native to the Highlands. The film has the sentimental appeal described above by Petrie, but is also displays its intelligence by playing with kailyardic conventions. Such a strategy can be usefully considered as a pastiching of kailyardic conventions. Describing the aesthetic value of this practice, Richard Dyer argues that it allows for the reproduction of pleasures from older representations while also acknowledging their historicity (2007, p. 138). For *Local Hero*, this means that the film is both a work of kailyardism and an attempt to transcend the discourse. The former characteristic is that which has been seized upon by Scottish critics who have pointed to international address as its cause. The latter is less acknowledged, but will be shown to be just as important to the film's international circulation. The recognition of the film's art cinema qualities, such as narrative ambiguity and themes of loneliness and alienation, are only some of the aspects of art cinema that are present in the film and its production and circulation. Textually these include the strategies of pastiche described above as well as the political and social commentary I attempted to elucidate, and in the next section I will explore similar issues in the film's extratextual life more fully.

Section 3: Industrial Contexts and the Historiography of *Local Hero*:

'Market-Driven Distortion'?

3.1: The Producer, the International Market and Critical Views of *Local Hero*

To begin the industrial analysis of the film, it is first important to revisit the film's critical detractors, focussing on their concern with how the film's industrial position has been seen as determining its representational strategies. Though the critiques of the film by McArthur, Petrie and Michie cited above use terms like 'market forces' and 'international address' to describe this position, there is also a particular member of *Local Hero*'s creative team that is most closely identified with commercial forces, that being the film's producer, David Puttnam. In McArthur's critique of the film in the 'Poor Celtic Cinema' article, the part that David Puttnam played in shaping *Local Hero* comes in for particular criticism when McArthur writes that the film was 'produced and packaged by David Puttnam' (1994, p. 119) for the international market as a way of explaining the ways in which Forsyth was led to utilize regressive discourses to represent Scotland.

Puttnam, and his relationship to the directors he works with, has also come in for criticism by Petrie. In his account of the British film industry during the 1980s, Puttnam is characterized by Petrie as a producer who is the dominant creative influence on the projects he oversees, in effect becoming a 'producer-auteur' (1991, pp. 177-178). This becomes, in Petrie's account, implicitly the 'wrong' kind of producer and his influence on film texts is presented as something that is inappropriate. Discussing the work of producer Stephen Woolley, Petrie writes that 'In each case, the films produced reflect very much the vision of the director involved rather than the producer, as is arguably the case with David Puttnam' (1991, p. 181). Such sentiments find their way into Petrie's later writing on Scottish cinema. When Petrie writes of *Local Hero* that within the context of Forsyth's oeuvre as a whole it represented 'a temporary retreat into a more stereotypical representation [of Scotland] for mass consumption' (2004, p. 61), he also describes *Local Hero* pointedly as a

‘more overtly commercial’ film ‘produced by David Puttnam and featuring Hollywood star Burt Lancaster in a supporting role’ (2004, p. 41). The implication here, rendered in terms that recall McArthur’s description of the film in *Scotch Reels* quoted above, is that the personnel mentioned, Puttnam and Lancaster, are evidence of the film being ‘more overtly commercial’. and, when taken together with his historical contextualization of the film, less nationally relevant. In the following section I will seek to look more closely at David Puttnam’s role in producing and packaging the film, beginning with his influence on the film text itself and then later how that text was sold to audiences at home and abroad.

3.2: David Puttnam, ‘Market-Forces’ and the Shaping of *Local Hero*

In reconstructing *Local Hero*’s production context, I will be drawing on a number of documents from the David Puttnam collection at the British Film Institute relating to the making of the film (a chronology of the film’s development, as well as short descriptions of these documents being drawn upon can be found in the appendix section corresponding to this chapter). While these documents do not give us a complete picture of which creative decisions were made and why, when taken together they do provide enough evidence to suggest a number of things that at times both support and contradict the hypothesis that ‘market forces’ and the film’s producer have had a more substantial impact on the film than Forsyth’s personal vision. I will argue, however, that on balance the contradictions outweigh the supporting pieces of evidence and indicate that Forsyth’s creativity underpinned the majority of the final version of the film.

The first documents I will make use of here are a number of screening reports from test audiences in Toronto and London. Test screenings and market research had by the early 1980s become an integral part of pre- and postproduction practices amongst Hollywood studios and distributors (Wyatt, 1994, p. 19) and Puttnam's usage of them to influence the final editing of the film indicates his emulation of the practices of the commercial industry's biggest players. This is not particularly surprising given that Warner Brothers, who had a distribution interest in the film from early on in its making, was involved in the production at this stage and actually conducted the North American test screenings. In order to determine if changes were made based on these reports, I will also make use of a series of reports and memos which passed between Puttnam, Forsyth, Warners executive Richard Del Belso and independent market researcher Val Lyon.

So what did the audiences think about *Local Hero* and how did their opinions end up influencing the film? The most often recurring problem that audiences both in North America and the UK had with the first cut of the film was with its pacing. The sample audiences were nearly unanimous in saying the film either seemed too long or dragged in parts. The North American test group specifically cited the ceilidh sequence, the negotiations with Ben and the repetition of certain motifs to be particular moments when the film became monotonously long (Del Belso 1982, p. 6). Based on the other documentary evidence available, Puttnam was apparently concerned with this aspect of the film. Twenty-one of his twenty-seven suggestions made for changing the film in a memo to Forsyth are concerned with shortening the film, often expressed as 'trimming' or 'tightening' specific scenes. Using another version of this memo labelled 'post-production' and featuring handwritten notes as a guide, many of these editorial suggestions seem to have been followed. Some of these

changes appear to have been fairly innocuous with no apparent damage being done to the film's major themes. An example of these would be Puttnam's suggestion that Mac's arrival at the airport in Aberdeen be sped up. There is not much, if anything lost in trimming this part of the film, the bulk of which is not detectable by comparing the second draft of the screenplay to the finished film.¹³ There is also evidence in some instances that Forsyth resisted Puttnam's suggestions for shortening the film and by so doing, preserved portions of the film with thematic import. One of the suggestions marked with a handwritten 'No' in the margin next to it is one suggesting cutting a line from Victor wherein he says that Mac 'speak[s] a lot of sense for an oil man'.¹⁴ Keeping this line in the film was apparently important to Forsyth and it is arguable that it is a part of the ecological/satirical project of the larger film. There are however very few 'No's in the memo and at least one moment when a major satirical element of the film was undermined in the name of 'trimming' the film. This pertains to the motif of military aircraft flying over Ferness – which I discussed previously as representing an instance of Forsyth critiquing Thatcherite militarism – and is worth looking at in some detail.

In his memo to Forsyth spelling out suggested changes to the first version of the film, Puttnam comments on this aspect of the film saying that there are 'too many aircraft' in the film, and asking Forsyth 'can we lose one?'. When considered alongside an explicit citation of the motif by Del Belso, this does indicate a fair amount of pressure on the part of the financiers to rein in Forsyth's usage of the bombers, and when one looks at the sheer volume of references to the flyovers in the second draft of the screenplay it is apparent that there was a great deal of 'trimming' done to this element of the film throughout the production process. The bombing runs are vividly described in this version of the script and continue until much later into the

narrative than is the case in the finished film. The script is also much more frank about the import of the motif. While Victor and Mac, in the script, wander around the town the morning after the ceilidh they idly watch the planes overhead. Forsyth's directions in the script characterize the link between those planes and the story's Cold War context: 'Beyond [Victor and Mac] the rehearsals for the Third World War are underway' (1981, p. 116). The bombings then continue almost right up to the end of the film, with one of the townsfolk jokingly asking about how much it would cost to buy one of the planes (1981, p. 130). Given the thematic import implied here as well as that described above, the decision to cut out some of the bombings does soften the political critique offered by the film and in that way supports the contention that market forces contributed to the depiction of Scotland as being removed from the world of contemporary politics (McArthur, 2003a, p. 77). But it is also important to remember that they do not completely nullify this aspect of the film and that some political critique does remain in the finished film in spite of these objections, even if it is arguably rendered less comprehensible by cutting down on its usage.

Despite this pointed bit of commercial influence, the majority of the proposed changes were not implemented. Also ranking highly amongst the complaints of test screeners was the size of the cast of characters and the number of subplots. Because of the many characters and their various stories, test screeners found the film somewhat confusing. The report from Warners makes mention of several characters and plots which audiences had trouble with, one of these which is of particular import for the critical reception of *Local Hero* is their objection to the two main female characters, Marina and Stella. Del Belso's comments regarding the audience's take on the two female characters are especially interesting in relation to the problem many critics have had with the ideological handling of gender in the film:

Young women had a tendency to express critical opinions about the portrayal of the female characters in the movie. They felt that both Marina and Stella were victims of a male chauvinistic attitude, treated as decorative objects rather than full-blooded characters. (1982, p. 6)

These comments seem to have occasioned very few changes in the film. Despite such sharp criticism of this aspect of the film, which is echoed in the UK screening report, Marina and Stella are not given any further development in the course of the reworking of the film. The screeners' reaction to the characters did not change at any point in the production process, in fact audience antipathy to Marina and Stella is surprisingly consistent in the UK screening reports before and after the recutting of the film. The same percentage of each audience – 11% – found the characters needing more development. Moreover, the second set of screeners ranked Marina and Stella, along with the African reverend, as the characters which they enjoyed the least (Lyon, 1982b, p. 7).

Based on this evidence, the apparently objectionable depiction of Marina and Stella cannot be said to be an aspect of the film which Puttnam and Forsyth were unaware of, and, more interestingly, it is an aspect of the film which appears to be in direct conflict with the demands of the marketplace. The criticism of these characters and their lack of development is consistent and resounding, but they nevertheless appear in the final version of the film largely unaltered, serving as an instance of Forsyth's integrity to his own personal vision, even if it is seen by test audiences and later film critics as something unpalatable. This is particularly interesting for critical writing on the film as the overly symbolic usage of the female characters as analogues to the Scottish elements (Marina being associated with the sea and Stella with the Highland firmament) has been counted as an aspect of the film which links it to *Brigadoon* and *The Maggie* where female characters are used in a similar, albeit in a

much more covert fashion. This similarity has been variously cited as evidence of Forsyth unconsciously succumbing to ingrained representations of Scotland (McArthur, 2003a, p. 8) or his consciously trying to mimic the sexist use of gender of his predecessors to similar commercial effect (Petrie, 2000, p. 156). The evidence presented here suggests instead that Forsyth, in this aspect of the film at least, was not naïve or overtly pandering to commercial concerns, but was knowingly acting in opposition to such concerns.

Another issue in the development of the film which will interest those interested in national representation is one related to the usage of landscape. The second draft of the screenplay features a great deal of often very lyrical description of the Highland elements and landscape, pausing at one point to describe the unique Highland evening light which has become known as the ‘gloaming’ (Forsyth, 1981, p. 79). It is also quite explicit in conflating these ‘tartan exteriors’, to once again borrow a phrase from McArthur, with a certain sense of Scottishness, remarking at one point that the Highland landscape is the most ‘typical Scottish image’ (1981, p. 32). The deployment of landscape in the finished film has been a target of criticism for some of the film’s detractors, who see it as another part of the film which was derivative of its *Whisky Galore!*-type predecessors and as a continuation of an inauthentic view of Scotland which is oriented towards tourism rather than ‘genuine’ national representation. In their treatise on Scottish heritage and tourism, for example, David McCrone, Angela Morris and Richard Kiely refer specifically to *Local Hero* as an example of films which use the iconography of the Scottish landscape in a manner similar to Scottish tourism advertisements (1995, p. 65).

Based on the documentary evidence under examination here, such criticism about the use of landscape as attraction for foreigners is validated somewhat. The

North American screening report lists ‘entrancing settings’ among the film’s main ‘sources of satisfaction’ (Del Belso, 1982, p. 2). But it is important to note that this reaction was not confined to North Americans, as the report from the British test screening indicates that 48% of the audience specifically mentioned that they enjoyed the film’s landscapes and scenery (Lyon, 1982a, p. 2). Puttnam himself comments on the use of landscape in his first set of suggestions to Forsyth, but he urges Forsyth to cut some of the scenery. Referring specifically to the exteriors during the ceilidh sequence, he suggests the removal of some scenic shots, saying about the deployment of landscape in general in the film, ‘I don’t think we need to milk it’.¹⁵ The suggested judiciousness with landscape shows just how much Puttnam thinks of it as one of the film’s attractions, one that was too valuable to overuse.

The final aspect of the film which had to contend with the influence of commercial pressures that I would like to comment on here is one that remained largely unchanged from the second draft of the screenplay through to the final film: the film’s ending. In his *The Undeclared War* David Puttnam refers to his own experiences in the making of *Local Hero* to illustrate the balance he sought to strike throughout his career between commercial and artistic demands. In so doing he mentions a particular incident that is worth quoting at some length:

Warner Brothers offered us additional funding to reshoot the ending [of *Local Hero*], so that the American, Mac, remained in Scotland, removing the lingering ambiguity. Were we to do so, they felt, we would have a film more ‘sympathetic’ to the expectations of the audience. This they believed could add 10 or even \$20 million to its eventual box-office performance...I have absolutely no doubt that they were right; had we reshot the ending, *Local Hero* may well have grossed an additional \$20 million in the international marketplace. In accepting their offer both myself and the director, Bill Forsyth, felt that we would have been betraying the spirit of the film. After all, the movie itself dramatizes an unresolved conflict between a pastoral view of the world and a more hard-edged commercial ideology. I still think that, given its impact on those who came to love the film and the integrity of its long-term reputation, we were right to decline. (1997, p. 335)

Though there is no record of this offer in the documents collected in the David Puttnam collection, it is not surprising that Warners would make one given what appears in the screening reports and the memos between Forsyth and Puttnam. The ending occupies a prominent place in the 'Specific Dislikes' section of the North American report. Del Belso goes into some detail explaining why audiences didn't like the ending, listing at one point four different issues viewers wanted the film to resolve, these being, in preferential order, the fates of the town, Mac, Ben and the villagers (1982, p. 7). Speaking about Mac in particular, the audiences felt that he should have run away to Ferness in the end, and complained about the downbeat tone of the film's denouement in relation to the rest of the film (Del Belso, 1982, p. 8). The report from the UK screenings likewise shows audience discontent with the ending which was found to be too 'open' and 'unresolved' (Lyon, 1982a, p. 4).

In spite of these audience objections/commercial pressures, it is clear in the production files that Puttnam was a strong supporter of leaving the ending unchanged throughout the production, even before the offer would have taken place. In his first memo to Forsyth he directly praises the film's ending for leaving the audience feeling unfulfilled, saying 'This is something all too seldom done in our self-indulgent industry'.¹⁶ The film's ending, which breaks so sharply from its *Whisky Galore!*-type predecessors, is thus one that remained intact despite the pressures of the marketplace. When this is considered alongside what several critics, Petrie and Hunter to name two, have argued is Forsyth's authorial signature – a thematic obsession with loneliness and personal alienation – we could see in the making of *Local Hero* the familiar story of the film-maker adhering to their vision in spite of the demands of the film's financial backers.

As I hope is clear by this point, characterizations of the development of *Local Hero* as either a project which was unduly influenced by commercial concerns or, conversely, as an instance of artistic independence in the midst of a profit-driven industry would both be inaccurate. But there is another way in which commercial concerns did strongly affect the film, though not in terms of how it ended up being assembled, but instead over how it was received by audiences upon its release. By this I am referring to how the film was sold to audiences around the world, a topic to which I will now turn.

3.3: ‘Packaging’ *Local Hero*: Marketing, Promotion and Reception

I remember on occasions being very glad the film-maker wasn’t there to hear me as I distorted his complex vision with a few, simple, descriptive strokes. *Local Hero*, for example, became a quirky comedy about a giant American oil company, which, in trying to buy a small Scottish village, is confronted by the apparently principled opposition of the stalwart villagers, who, in reality, are only stalling to push up the price. Of course, it’s a far more complicated film than that, but for the purposes of selling to Hollywood that’s what you have to say.

-- Jake Eberts on pitching films to Hollywood studios. (Quoted in Eberts and Illot, 1990, p. 32)

I still think of myself as a marketing man who happens to produce movies, not as a film-maker who happened to have an advertising background.

-- David Puttnam (Quoted in Walker, 2004, p. 32)

While the writers I have cited comment mainly upon the film’s production context, there is another facet of commercial cinema that I would argue (at least in part) informs the negative reception of *Local Hero* amongst Scottish film critics. This facet is one that is closely intertwined with the film’s status as ‘internationally oriented’, that being the way it has been marketed and promoted. McArthur, for one,

explicitly takes issue with this aspect of the film, as he criticized the way it was ‘produced and “packaged”’ for the international market (1994, p. 119). Being exportable, or trying to be exportable, inherently puts emphasis on a film’s status as global commodity and the ways in which that commodity is made alluring to consumers can often lend insights into the intercultural issues raised by nationally-specific cinema in a global context. In this portion of the essay I would like to look more closely at how *Local Hero*’s advertising constructs the film, especially in cultural terms, and then offer some speculation as to how that construction has influenced the way critics and audiences understand the film.

A concern with how films set in Scotland have been marketed can be seen in Scottish film criticism in McArthur’s works *Brigadoon*, *Braveheart and the Scots* and *The Maggie & Whisky Galore!*. To buttress his ideological critique of these films, McArthur examines their marketing in order to offer it as evidence of the film’s ideological project. Writing in his study of *Whisky Galore!* and *The Maggie*, he lays out the reasoning behind this methodology: ‘[marketing documents] constitute useful evidence as to how the company involved viewed the film at the time’ (2003a, p. 80). Although he is writing specifically here about pressbooks from studios, McArthur’s rationale is applied to his study of other promotion materials including posters, film-related clothing and memorabilia, and even events and activities organized to promote the film. While many of the conclusions that McArthur draws from his analyses of these documents are persuasive, they do not in my view constitute evidence that the film itself is necessarily of the same ideological persuasion as its marketing suggests. McArthur’s underlying thesis about the understanding companies have of the films in question is to my mind somewhat flawed. I would rephrase it as such: marketing documents constitute useful evidence of how the company involved

saw it as easiest to sell the film to audiences. The profit motive governing film promotion means that a company will market the film in the terms it finds most appealing to audiences at large and not necessarily the terms in which it understands the film being promoted.

The distinction between these views is particularly crucial when studying films which are subject to accusations of cultural misrepresentation. If one were to scrutinize the marketing and promotion of *Local Hero*, at least in its early stages, it would be possible to come to similar conclusions as those McArthur draws from his examination of the marketing and promotion of *Brigadoon*. Those involved in marketing *Local Hero* drew on many stereotypes about the Highlands and its inhabitants and encouraged the sort of readings of the film which I have been concerned here with debunking. This can be seen through an examination of some of the more conventional marketing devices as well as more unconventional ones. As we will see, the tension between the reading I have offered and the one offered by those in the marketing departments at Fox and Warner Brothers strangely mirrors the one between my reading and those of the film's detractors which I have cited. Both sets of interpreters have, in my opinion, seized upon the same elements in the film and have offered distorted understandings of *Local Hero*.

The strategies of simplifying a film's complexities and latching on to its most internationally recognized discursive qualities can be seen in *Local Hero*'s trailer. As a heavily edited work of found footage, often featuring an explanatory narration track offering an overview of the film's plot, a trailer properly analysed can be an excellent indication of which portions of the film the distributor thought most appealing to audiences. The condensed version of the film's narrative can likewise be very telling. *Local Hero*'s trailer, as featured on its Warner Brothers 1999 DVD release, is a

remarkable example of just how a trailer can iron out the subtle irony of a film and manipulate the film's contents to make it seem like a completely different work. As flute and drum music plays slowly on the soundtrack, we see Mac in Happer's planetarium as the roof opens, we hear that voice-of-God narrator that seems to only exist in trailers, say, in a monologue interspersed with clips from the film (narration in bold, images and scenes shown in brackets):

There is a place where the Northern Lights transform the sky...[Happer tells Mac to watch the sky and to phone him about what he sees]...**Modern mermaids spring from the sea...**[Cut to Marina meeting with Danny on the beach]...[Cut to Ben saying to Mac and Gordon that he finds amazing things every two or three weeks]...[Cut to Mac and Danny's car in the mist]...**The land breathes with an ancient mystery...**[Cut to Mac in the car saying 'Where are we?']...[Cut to Mac watching the meteor shower]...**And all who witness its wonders come to believe in its magic...**[Cut to Happer receiving Mac's call about the Northern Lights]...[Cut to Mac in the phone booth watching the lights trying to explain them to Happer]...[Cut to the villagers on the beach seeing the light of Happer's helicopter in the sky; it is never made clear in this clip that this is Happer's chopper and instead gives the impression of a divine light in the firmament]...**This is the new film from the producer of *Chariots of Fire. Local Hero*...**[A montage of images summarizing the oil company's plan to buy the town and Mac as its agent: Gordon is shown dancing on the chair saying 'We're gonna be rich']...**Peter Reigert and Burt Lancaster...**[Montage now shows Mac's desire to stay in the town, offering to swap lives with Gordon; cut to shot of Danny, from behind, running into the water to Marina. The editing makes it appear to be Mac running into the water, going native¹⁷]...**Local Hero...**[Cut to Ben

laughing in front of the fire]...**The story of an ordinary man who cared enough to do something extraordinary...**[Cut to a continuation of Danny swimming to Marina, implication remains that this is Mac we're seeing]...*Local Hero*.

As Lisa Kernan argues of trailers generally, the trailer for *Local Hero* 'accentuates the film's surface of cinematic spectacle, displaying the film's shiniest wares, or most attractive images, positioning it as a commodity for sale' (2005, p. 10). Some of these are the creative personnel, the stars and the producer specifically. Others, though, are the sometimes laughable clichés which are generally associated with tartanry and kailyardism: the Northern Lights, 'modern mermaids', a land that 'breathes with an ancient mystery', etc. The images selected by the trailer-makers likewise emphasise these aspects of the film: meteor showers and the northern lights are on display; the Highland mists feature prominently; Mac appears to go native even more than he did in the film as the editing has him running into the water to embrace a woman, and so on.

Other documents relating to the film's promotion use similar strategies. The film's main advertising poster, which graces the case for its DVD release, is the most common image associated with the film's promotion. The image here is a painted picture of Mac and Happer in full business suits except for shoes and socks as they are wading in the water of a Highland bay, complete with seagulls circling overhead and far off mountains visible in the distance. Romantic landscape is thus juxtaposed with 'going native', shedding one's business suit and getting into the water, just as was the case with the trailer's deceptive montage which makes it seem to be Mac who is swimming out to Marina. The poster's illustrator, Allan Manham, in a memo to Puttnam, described the guiding thought behind the paintings as showing 'the contrast

between the smart and sophisticated world of international business and the refreshing values of the little community'.¹⁸ Other existing poster images, including Mac in the phone booth with the villagers surrounding it peering in and another which features a stretch limousine parked on the beach outside of Ben's shack, offer variations upon this kailyardic theme.

In addition to these standard marketing devices the film also had a tie-in marketing promotion with the Scottish Tourist Board and John Menzies Outfitters, a retailer that specialized in outdoor clothing and supplies. Shoppers at John Menzies could win tickets to see *Local Hero* and some would be eligible for an all expenses paid holiday in the Highlands.¹⁹ David Puttnam arranged special screenings all over Scotland for school children on the pretext of showing them what the Highlands were like.²⁰ Special screenings were arranged for radio disc jockeys seeking to market the film's soundtrack, which featured Mark Knopfler's arrangements of traditional ceilidh music as well as his swelling romantic compositions which accompanied many of the film's landscape shots. Newspaper articles, such as one in an Aberdeen newspaper,²¹ offered accounts of the film's production focus on the rascally behaviour of the inhabitants of Pennan, the village where the film was shot, as they played 'kailyardic' tricks on the producers in hopes of getting more money out of them.

The ideological slant of this marketing is by now very clear. It offers precisely the sort of exoticised Highland environment that many critics accused the film of offering. But as my analysis has shown, this is not an accurate summary of *Local Hero*'s representational tendencies. Marketing is always a reductive practice. Film commercials and trailers are, after all, two minutes long at the most and commonly condense narratives into the most accessible storyline imaginable, all in the name of attracting viewers to the theatres to see the rest. Furthermore, as Kernan has argued

about trailers and Wyatt has argued about marketing generally, when the film in question is more complex and unconventional than standard generic film-making, advertising the film requires simplifying the film, fitting it into recognizable patterns and doing so in such a way that is often a distortion of the film itself (Kernan, 2004, p. 51; Wyatt, 1994, p. 10).

The reductiveness of the film's marketing campaign can also be attributed to the 'high concept' approach to film-marketing which Wyatt argues was at its peak in the early 1980s (1994, p. 15). Such an approach places emphasis on presenting film's in simple terms, with the ideal, according to Wyatt, being a film plot that can be summarized in one sentence and is relatively consistently used from the 'pitching' of a project to a studio through to its marketing to audiences (1994, p. 9). This brings us back to the quotation from Eberts which opened this section of the chapter, in which Eberts differentiates between the ways in which a film is understood by its makers and the ways in which it is framed for mass consumption. In the case of *Local Hero* marketing and promotional materials do represent Ferness as a quaint, magical place, populated by eccentric oddballs, into which the representatives of modernity enter only to become entranced by the simple life that they find there. This reductive view of what is a much more complex and intricately satirical film is the actual 'market-driven distortion', a product of selective misreading that latches on to the most clichéd elements of the film in a bid to reach a large international audience, one that may have seen and loved films such as *Brigadoon* or *Whisky Galore*.

But the film was not just marketed for the masses. Though the marketing materials described above constitute the main branch of the film's marketing campaign, the promotion of the film did change over time as the film remained on release and later posters and trailers incorporated critical praise from reviewers in

quality newspapers, and reviewers in such newspapers, such as Andrew Sarris in *The Village Voice* and Pauline Kael in *The New Yorker*, advised readers that the film was ‘not just’ another formulaic small town comedy (Sarris, 1983, p. 55; Kael, 1983, p. 118). Such a differentiation brings us back to the reasons that Puttnam gave for not changing the film’s ending. The film’s break from generic precedent, Puttnam argued, was a distinctive touch that lent the film an integrity which would have been lacking if he and Forsyth opted for a happy ending. The artistic integrity and innovation inherent in the film’s ending, in which critics have also found Forsyth’s auteurist sensibilities, were necessary according to Puttnam as a method of product differentiation, making it a more intellectually upscale product than it would have been otherwise.

Such an impetus to market the film in artistic terms is consistent with what Hill argues was an increasing trend in the 1980s which saw British films circulate internationally as art cinema even if their content was not always in keeping with the aesthetic practices of traditional art cinema (1999, p. 66). It is also in keeping with how the film was distributed and promoted over the longer timeline of its global release. The film, which opened in selected cities on February 17, 1983 and gradually distributed more and more widely in a so-called ‘platform’ pattern in North America and the UK, was still playing as late as July 11, 1983 in Scotland (*The Herald*, 1983) and, according to memos in Puttnam’s production files, was intended to be re-released in early 1984 to cash in on any Oscar nominations it may have garnered.²² Such a distribution strategy (gradual release of the film, reliance on word of mouth publicity, extended run in cinemas) indicates that the film circulated in a manner akin to prestigious art films rather than ‘high concept’ commercial films, which generally

look to generate most of their revenue at the box office in the opening few weeks of a wide simultaneous release.²³

3.4: Box Office Success, Tourism and Puttnam's Influence Reconsidered

Following such a simultaneously 'high concept' and specialized marketing campaign, *Local Hero* was commercially successful on many fronts. It was very successful at box offices in the UK, North America and France amongst other places.²⁴ The film spawned a bestselling soundtrack as well as a novelisation by David Benedictus. Tourism in the Highlands surged to a new high and the town of Pennan was so overwhelmed by tourists looking for the red phone booth from the film that the local council was forced to purchase one.²⁵ The film also received a great deal of acclaim from non-Scottish critics, as seen in the Sarris and Kael reviews discussed above, and won a number of critical prizes such as the New York Film Critic's Circle award for Best Screenplay. Such a commercial and critical reception serves to bring us back to David Puttnam and his influence on the film.

In suggesting an auteur view of Puttnam's work as a producer, Petrie argues that 'Puttnam is so involved with the creative aspects of the [film-making] process that there are strong thematic and aesthetic continuities running through his work regardless of the different directors and writers involved' (1991, pp. 177-178). In terms of *Local Hero* at least this is a bit overstated; there is little or any textual similarity to be found between Forsyth's film and other contemporary Puttnam projects such as *Midnight Express* (Alan Parker, 1978), *Cal* (Pat O'Connor, 1984) or *The Killing Fields* (Roland Joffé, 1984). The aspect of *Local Hero* that more convincingly connects it to Puttnam's oeuvre is in the pattern of promotion and

distribution outlined above which also characterized many of Puttnam's films in the 1980s, especially Academy Award winners *Chariots of Fire* and *The Killing Fields*.²⁶ In textual terms, with its melancholic overtones and its multi-layered ironic construction, *Local Hero* is very much a Bill Forsyth film that sits easily alongside *Gregory's Girl* and *That Sinking Feeling*.

Conclusion: *Local Hero*, 'The Cross-Over' Film and Scottish Film

Historiography

In this chapter I hope to have shown that *Local Hero* is first and foremost a film that rewards further textual and contextual consideration than it has been given in Scottish cinema studies. In so doing, I have been responding to move past a long history of critical derision for the film. This derision has been closely related to critical attitudes towards the film's industrial status, and this has had the effect of blocking a fuller consideration of the film's very complex historical situation. Looking more closely at both the text and industrial contexts of *Local Hero* show the film to be neither a tragic example of a promising Scottish film-maker perpetuating cultural stereotypes to meet the demands of the international market, nor an industrially-determined simpleminded remake of films like *The Maggie* or *Brigadoon*. Though it was made with English money and was marketed to international audiences, *Local Hero* nonetheless interacts with Scottish national culture in ways that challenge stereotypes and reflect on the lived reality of contemporary Scots, all while addressing 'universal' themes such as personal and social alienation.

But *Local Hero* was also not a film that was completely immune to market pressures, and was significantly affected by those pressures. It was neither able to

exist as an auteur-oriented art film nor was it a completely crass attempt to cash in on stereotypical images of Scotland. Instead the picture that has emerged in this analysis is that of a film which has occupied a position somewhere in between art cinema and commercial cinema, at times drawing on aspects of both to reach audiences. In this way the film epitomizes the ‘cross-over’ form, a type of film-making that will be seen again and again throughout this thesis and Scottish cinema as a whole during this period. Significantly, for the concerns of the thesis as a whole, we will see the practices and strategies employed by Enigma and Goldcrest, two private companies, continued in publicly funded projects. In the next chapter we will see a different manifestation of the same phenomenon in relation to a film made with the backing of a public service broadcaster. As we will see, this is a project with similar critical and ideological baggage to *Local Hero* attached to it, coming this time in relation to its status as a so-called ‘heritage’ film.

Chapter 3: *Mrs. Brown*: Scottish Cinema in an Age of Devolved Public Service Broadcasting

Introduction: Overlooking *Mrs. Brown* Within Scottish Cinema Historiography

After *Local Hero*, and the widely discussed *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, 1996), *Mrs. Brown* ranks as the most prominent indigenously produced Scottish film of all time in terms of both popularity and critical prestige. Despite this position, the film is only briefly discussed, if at all, within writing on Scottish cinema, heretofore garnering only brief mentions in survey histories and a short analysis in a dossier publication (Neely, 2005). Other more extensive treatments of the film can be found within British cinema studies, but such writing, which I will discuss below, pointedly neglects the film's Scottish content. In this chapter I will attempt to fill these gaps. As we will see, it is not simply a matter of international prominence that makes *Mrs. Brown* such an important film – though the issue of export will be crucial for my analysis – the film also presents an opportunity for discussing a number of concerns at the heart of the thesis as a whole, including the depiction of Scottish national identity amongst the groundswell of devolutionary sentiment; the unique problems associated with balancing the apparently discordant impulses relating to export and domestic relevance, as well as public service and mass appeal; and the localization of production institutions via devolutionary policy shifts. In order to discuss these issues, we must begin with the institutions themselves, those being the BBC and its local incarnation, BBC Scotland, but before looking at the importance of devolving the BBC, I will begin by briefly examining the role that television networks, especially

public service broadcasters, have played within the British and Scottish film industries.

Section 1: Devolution, Public Service and Selling National Culture to Foreigners: Institutional Contexts and *Mrs. Brown*

1.1: Television Involvement in British and Scottish Cinema

Writing in the mid-1990s, Andrea Calderwood, then head of BBC Scotland and executive producer of *Mrs. Brown*, claimed that the best way to describe the industry in Scotland at that time was as one of ‘a film and television industry’ rather than a ‘film industry’ proper (N.D., p. 190). The credit for the existence of any media industry at all in Scotland is attributed by Calderwood to investment by broadcasters, namely Channel 4 and BBC Scotland. Such a description has been echoed by Ivan Turok who notes that, ‘Television provides more continuity than feature films in Scotland and has had a bigger impact on local jobs and infrastructure. It has done more to develop creative and technical talent and to help establish production companies with the capacity for growth’ (2003, p. 558). Looking further back in history, Duncan Petrie devotes an entire chapter of *Screening Scotland* to detailing the importance of television drama in the 1970s and 1980s for maintaining a Scottish presence in British television and training a generation of film technicians and professionals (2000a, pp. 123-147). Scotland is not unique in this regard. As the work of John Hill and Martin McLoone (N.D.), and Caughie (1986, 2000) has shown, the industrial situation in Britain in recent history has been characterized by increasing

convergence between the film and television industries, and not just in terms of training and employing creative personnel.

Besides its capacity to act as a training ground for its personnel, Calderwood also points out the more direct dependence of the Scottish film industry on television money as a source of production finance, as nearly every Scottish film has benefited from broadcaster investment, an observation demonstrated by the fact that four of the six films produced in 1995 were funded at least in part by broadcasters (N.D., p. 193).²⁷ This pattern has been consistent throughout the history of indigenous film production in Scotland, before and after Calderwood's account was written. Channel 4 has supported the production of canonical 'new Scottish' works such as *Trainspotting*, *Orphans* (Peter Mullan, 1999) and *Another Time, Another Place* (Michael Radford, 1983) while BBC Scotland has played major parts in funding works such as *Small Faces* (Gillies MacKinnon, 1995), *Ratecatcher* (Lynne Ramsay, 1999) and *Morvern Callar* (Lynne Ramsay, 2002). Even preceding the establishment of Channel 4, which has historically been the broadcaster most involved in the British film industry, television played an important part in getting Scottish films made, as Petrie points out regarding STV's support for Bill Forsyth's *Gregory's Girl* (1981) (2004, p. 41). Hill, whose work has sought to dispute the initial apocalyptic anxieties which greeted the increased imbrication of the film and television industries, has expressed hope for the progressive potential of public service broadcasters getting involved in national cinema production: 'there is the possibility that television films can draw sustenance from television's public service tradition and speak to their own cultures in a way that Hollywood films increasingly do not' (N.D., p. 166).

Hill's hopeful comments will be very important for my analysis of *Mrs. Brown*, and for much of this chapter I will be asking if this can be said to apply to this

particular film. But before considering whether or not this has been the case for Scottish cinema, we should look a bit more closely at BBC Scotland's 'limited but very significant involvement' in the Scottish film industry (Petrie 2000a, p. 140) as well as the importance that the devolution of Britain's dominant media institution has had in historiographies of Scottish cinema.

1.2: BBC Scotland: Institutional Devolution and the 'Scottish Cultural Renaissance'

Despite the consistent audience gains by rival terrestrial and satellite broadcasters since the establishment of the ITV networks in 1955, the BBC has retained a place at the centre of the British media universe. Such a position has endowed the broadcaster with a unique position as a unifying force for a supranational state such as Britain. As Sillars has noted:

Within the complexity of the British experience, as a state made up of several nations, broadcasting has presented a powerful unifying voice for a coherent national identity. The role of the BBC [...] has been crucial in the production and maintenance of a shared British national identity in the twentieth century. (1999, p. 246)

The BBC started local television broadcasting in Scotland in the early 1950s, and established a studio in the country around the same time that the ITV companies, with their emphases on regional production, took to the airwaves. Turok describes original production by BBC Scotland as gradually emerging from this point on and doing so largely in response to fears of losing Scottish audiences to STV (2003, p. 558). Both Turok and Petrie cite the devolutionary movement of the 1970s as the source of a push for an increase in indigenous production, a push which eventually led to the

establishment of a new drama production unit in Glasgow in 1979 (Turok, 2003, p. 559; Petrie, 2004, p. 4). Petrie describes the creation of the unit as one of the 'key institutional developments' of the period, one which laid the groundwork for the beginnings of a 'new high profile era of Scottish television drama' beginning in 1984 under the leadership of Bill Bryden and continuing after the appointment of Andrea Calderwood as head of the department in 1993 (2000a, pp. 140-142; 2004, p. 4). This was an epoch which saw the production of such works as *Tutti Frutti* (1987), *Your Cheatin' Heart* (1990) and *Ruffian Hearts* (1995), works that have become constitutive of a sort of 'new Scottish television' canon in Petrie's accounts.

But there are problems with such a view of BBC Scotland's dramatic production. The corpus of television drama produced by BBC Scotland and included in Petrie's overview of the Scottish cultural renaissance is not a complete listing of the department's output during this period, however, nor does it include some of its most prominent works. Neither the dramatic serial *Hamish Macbeth* nor the Oscar-nominated *Mrs. Brown* are mentioned within the context of the 'Scottish cultural renaissance', and *Monarch of the Glen* is only mentioned as an example of the 'market-driven distortions' that Petrie omits from his study (2004, p. 209). While I will leave the analyses of works such as *Hamish* and *Monarch* to other writers, overlooking the case of *Mrs. Brown* as a product of BBC Scotland's drama department will be shown to have had the effect of writing a deceptively complex and significant film out of the new Scottish period, thus only telling a part of the story of institutional policy and Scottish national cinema, especially in the 1990s, a period which saw the concept of public service broadcasting undergo such fundamental change. As this ethos is, theoretically at least, at the heart of the BBC's production

policies. it is worth looking more closely at the historical specificity of its inflection in the 1990s at the time when *Mrs. Brown* was commissioned and produced.

1.3: Between Mass Appeal and Moral Duty: Public Service Programming in the 1990s

There are few terms within television and media studies that are as contentious as public service broadcasting. A great deal of literature on this subject has emanated from policy-makers, journalists, academics and cultural critics attempting to define the essence of the concept with some degree of precision. Though some reflection on the history of the term in relation to British broadcasting will be necessary in order to appreciate the degree of change the term has seen, I will not here be concerned with providing a comprehensive overview of the evolving meanings attributed to the concept – an undertaking that would require a thesis (at least) unto itself. Instead, I will attempt to sketch out the debates around the term's meanings as they were manifest in the 1990s. As we will see, these debates echo those in the realms of film policy and film historiography in terms of balancing what can be roughly termed 'cultural' and 'commercial' concerns.

Public service broadcasting in the earliest Reithian formulation has long been seen as one oriented towards social amelioration through the famous trinity of information, education and entertainment. Crucial for such a purpose for broadcasting in Reith's view was protection from market pressures, pressures which would have theoretically led to lower standards and meant appealing to the basest of human sensibilities, the much derided 'lowest common denominator'. As Paddy Scannell writes:

Broadcasting [in the Reithian mould] had a responsibility to bring into the greatest possible number of homes in the fullest degree all that was best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour, and achievement. The preservation of a high moral tone – the avoidance of the vulgar and the hurtful -- was of paramount importance. Broadcasting should give a lead to public taste rather than pander to it. (2000, p. 47)

While Reithian inspired broadcasting was never completely dour, educationally-oriented in nature, the monopoly that the BBC enjoyed until 1955 meant that audience tastes were less important to the broadcaster than they were after the advent of commercial broadcasting in that year. Faced with competition for the first time, the BBC had to appeal more directly to audience desires in order to maintain a presence in public life (Franklin, 2001, p. 8). Such competition has only increased throughout the half century since the introduction of commercial broadcasting as the number of broadcast networks has increased to five and the number of digital and satellite networks has increased exponentially since their introduction in the late 1980s.

Within such a larger trajectory, it is possible to see the 1980s and 1990s as a particularly crucial period when the definition of public service broadcasting itself began to be imbued with what were originally considered to be contradictory demands of market pressures and what could loosely be termed cultural high-mindedness. With the convening of the Peacock Committee in 1986 under the auspices of the free market-oriented Thatcher government, commercial pressures became a more prominent concern for the corporation. Though the Committee did not recommend the introduction of advertising as a means of financing the BBC and actually reaffirmed some of the network's Reithian principles, this was largely viewed as a surprise, as it was widely believed that advertising would be introduced to finance the BBC (Franklin, 2001, p. 25). Though the Committee left the licence fee system intact and

reaffirmed public service as a goal for broadcasters, it did however prioritize commercial considerations and consumer choice above public service (Scannell, 2000, p. 55).

Attempting to balance these goals became the official line at the BBC. As Bob Franklin notes, in the 1992 Green Paper *The Future of the BBC*, the corporation outlined two options for its future, one which would see it ‘identify and colonise the “high ground” of broadcasting’ with news, art and science programming or conversely, one which would see it move towards maximizing audience appeal, options that the corporation would eventually claim to be pursuing concomitantly (2001, p. 100). Public service broadcasting was explicitly described in the Green Paper as having eight objectives: focus on the audience; quality; diversity and choice; accessibility; editorial independence; efficiency and value for money; accountability; and national identity (reproduced in Franklin, 2001, pp. 29-30), thereby effectively subsuming commercial and cultural impulses into a single category, impulses which, it should be remembered, were initially held to be inherently contradictory in the Reithian definition of public service.

In addition to these explicit criteria for public service broadcasting to meet, there is also the underlying implicit idea that such broadcasting should act as a mechanism of market correction, providing content that would not be available if market forces were to completely control the creative agenda of broadcasters. Such a position can be seen in the Peacock Committee’s report when they write that one important reason for the continuation of public service broadcasting was that ‘many people would like high quality material to be available even though they would not willingly watch or listen to it themselves in large enough numbers for it to be paid for directly’ (reproduced in Franklin, 2001, p. 26). A later report on the BBC, the Davies

Report in 1999, stated this reasoning more directly: ‘some form of market failure must lie at the heart of any concept of public service broadcasting’ (reproduced in Franklin, 2001, p. 33), but the thinking has always in some senses been a part of the ethos behind the institution.

Accompanying this principle of market failure and correction through public service, is the duty of public service broadcasters to cater to minority interests, sections of the population which on their own would not constitute large enough audiences to make such programming economically viable. Minority in this case could apply to ethnic minority groups such as British-Asians or those of Afro-Caribbean descent, but it could also be said to apply to the national regions of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, which would be alienated by a broadcasting regime which only served the English majority of the British market. A provision for such specialised market correction can be seen in the Green Paper of 1992, which stated that ‘as a public service broadcasting organization, the BBC might be expected to continue to broadcast services for people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting their interests, activities and cultural heritage’ (reproduced in Franklin, 2001, p. 101).

Such a set of criteria was in place at the time of *Mrs. Brown*’s commissioning and production and throughout this analysis I will refer back to them, but there is another dimension of the film’s production context that must be accounted for, that being its status as a co-production with American public television.²⁸ Though the 1992 Green Paper argued for the importance of the BBC programming as an alternative to the products of ‘organizations with multi-national interests for transmission in more than one country’ (reproduced in Franklin, 2001, p. 101), this was not an unusual production arrangement for the corporation to participate in. Co-

production of dramas with American public television had by this point become a common practice for the BBC as deals with the producers of the programme Masterpiece Theatre and flagship PBS networks such as WGBH and WNET were regularly embarked upon. This became such a common practice that one could say by the 1990s that much BBC drama production was economically dependent on such American investment (Steemers, 2004, p. 112). Such deals allow American partners to secure British content whilst increasing the budgets available to producers at the BBC. For some these arrangements were, and continue to be, somewhat problematic given the national remit of the BBC. It is to these objections and the issues they raise that I now turn.

1.4: Export Pressures and BBC Drama: Who is British Television For?

In detailing the position of British television production in the global marketplace, Jeannette Steemers notes that since the 1980s literary and historical dramas have been one of the most consistent British television exports, but argues that they have largely failed to achieve ratings successes at home (2004, p. 33).²⁹ Such productions continued, Steemers writes, because literary and historical dramas ‘sold in the US and fulfilled a public service obligation in respect of “cultural heritage”’ (2004, p. 33). In the case of drama production generally, export pressures, for Steemers, are inherently at odds with domestic needs. She writes that there is ‘a market discrepancy between what works internationally and what works in the domestic marketplace’ (2004, p. 33).

For John Caughie, the relationship between the BBC and American television partners is one that has a direct influence on the content of the network’s dramatic

production. He argues that such co-production agreements invariably determined the types of representations that were to be created; see his description of the pressures inherent in the deals: ‘The price [the BBC] paid was that the American end of ‘‘the deal’’ had to be assured that what was produced would be what American producers believed American audiences wanted to see from Britain’ (2000, p. 208). Such an economic relationship has, for Caughie, had the effect of dictating the vision of the British past available in television. There is thus a suspicion in Caughie’s writing that British television costume drama no longer ‘belongs’ to Britain and that these images are largely for foreign consumption; as he writes in an earlier essay, ‘It is fairly clear that the rush to foreign markets leaves a large gap in the BBC’s inherited policy of public service and the national cultural mission’ (1986, p. 198).

Such views of the influence of export pressures, particularly those coming from American markets, bear eerie similarities to concerns to be found throughout the history of writing on British and Scottish cinema, concerns which I have detailed earlier in this thesis. This leaves *Mrs. Brown*, a film that started out as a television drama co-produced with American public television, doubly exposed to complaints regarding audience and cultural address. Many of these issues will come into focus as we move into a discussion of the film itself, a discussion which will begin with a consideration of costume drama, a genre long held to be made in Britain but not necessarily for British audiences.

Section 2: Picturing Scottish Heritage: Generic and Aesthetic Contexts for *Mrs. Brown*

2:1: Costume Drama, Historical Fiction and the ‘Heritage Film’

Genre, with its status as an industrial as well as a critical category, is an ideal way to bridge the institutional and aesthetic analyses of *Mrs. Brown*. There are few generic modes in British film and television studies as widely commented upon and debated as that which we can broadly term costume drama. Such works, which have been consistently popular products of the British screen industries, are unified by their being set in the historical past and featuring a mise-en-scène dominated by elements of that past, the most iconic of these being the costumes referred to in the name of the category. Such is the degree of scholarship on costume drama in Britain that a number of critical distinctions have been made between its different manifestations. Two such sub-categories that have developed a degree of critical currency and which are of particular usefulness for a discussion of *Mrs. Brown* are the historical film and the heritage film. In this section of the chapter I will be less interested in trying to fit the film into these categories as I will be in using the categories as ways into the film.

The appellation 'historical film' is useful in this regard because of the film's concern with actual persons and events, a concern which is not true of all costume dramas. That the film's depiction of actual historical persons, and more specifically British royals, was one of its perceived attractions is evidenced by the fact that Miramax initially distributed the film with the title *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* in order to emphasize the fact that Queen Victoria was actually the title character (Sloman, 1998, p. 15). One of the ways in which historical fiction is commonly seen as operating on a thematic level is through the interpretation of those lives and events, which in historical fiction analyses is generally seen as being a commentary on the time in which the film itself was made (Chapman, 2005, p. 3). Thus the reverential treatment of Victoria seen in *Victoria the Great* (Herbert Wilcox, 1936) can be

viewed as an affirmation of the monarchy at a time when the abdication crisis had undermined public confidence in the institution (Chapman, 2005. 8). James Chapman (2005), Kara McKechnie (2001. 2002) and to a lesser extent Julianne Pidduck (2004, p. 169) have each written about *Mrs. Brown* within such a framework, focusing on how the film depicts the life of Victoria and comparing it to other depictions of English monarchs such as Wilcox's Victoria films, as well as *The Madness of King George* (Nicholas Hytner, 1994) and *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (Alexander Korda, 1933). Such readings are useful as far as they go, but are exclusively concerned with Victoria and Englishness, only pausing to mention Brown and Scottishness. There is no in-depth analysis by either author of what the film says about Scottishness or about the relationship between Scotland and Great Britain. A significant part of my analysis will be concerned with filling this gap in the writing about the film and trying to determine what the film has to say through its depiction of one crisis in the history of Britain, while also having been produced during what could be perceived as another, namely the second devolution referendum in 1997. Before coming to such an analysis, we need to look at the other major aesthetic/industrial/critical context which *Mrs. Brown* in which I believe the film can be usefully considered.

The heritage film is one of the most controversial categories in British cinema studies. Such is the level of debate around the paradigm that several writers, including Claire Monk (2002) and Andrew Higson (2003), have devoted large portions of their works to recounting the history of the term itself and its usage. Though many of the points raised in these debates are germane to understanding the nuances of the films somewhat monolithically known as being heritage works, I will here be using the term in a relatively straightforward way that draws on Higson's influential descriptions of

both the aesthetic and thematic tendencies of this mode of film-making. This is not to imply that all costume dramas made in Britain adhere to the conventions that Higson describes in his work. There is, however, an extent to which most British costume drama since the success of *Chariots of Fire* and the films of James Ivory and Ismail Merchant – the films which have become the focal point of much of the heritage paradigm – has been in some ways a continuation of, or a reaction to, the kind of film-making found in those films. As we will see, *Mrs. Brown* is no exception to this rule and the paradigm of heritage can thus be usefully brought to bear on the film, in both aesthetic and industrial terms.

In the small body of literature on the film which is written from the perspective of Scottish cinema, the film's status as a 'heritage' film is the focal point of the analysis. In his survey-oriented *Screening Scotland*, Petrie describes the film as 'ostensibly a Scottish contribution to the popular "heritage film"', and points out some of the film's 'heritage' aspects, including its use of meticulously detailed sets and tourist-friendly landscapes (2000a, p. 212). Colin McArthur's (2001) review of the film for *Sight and Sound* never uses the term 'heritage film' but it does comment on issues of costume, 'quality' and its perceived conservative ideology, all of which routinely feature prominently in debates around heritage films. Most recently, Sarah Neely (2005) has used the film to argue that heritage cinema as a critical term is conceived in ways that are too Anglo-centric to account for Scottish variants of the mode such as *Mrs. Brown*. Though she does not propose an alternative framework to fill this gap, Neely does offer a brief but concise overview of some of the heritage facets of the film. While I will be drawing on, and sometimes disputing, the considerable insights to be found in these writings on the film, I will here go into more detail regarding issues of economics, aesthetic and representational tendencies

inherent in the heritage paradigm than any of these too brief treatments have been able to do. I will also seek to combine the heritage understanding of the film with a concomitant attention to matters of historical interpretation, which only McArthur has attempted to deal with.

2.2: Stylistic Difference and National Allegory

In analysing *Mrs. Brown* in terms of its representation of history, we should begin with the view of the film, articulated by Petrie, Neely and McArthur that its main stylistic strategy is based around the opposition between the robust energy of Brown (and, by implication, Scottishness) and ‘an England marked by genteel restraint and repression that is characteristic of conventional heritage representations’ (Neely, 2005, p. 244). In order to develop these insights to a greater degree and to offer a reading of what exactly the film is trying to tell us through this opposition, I will in this section of the essay look at the film in terms of the stylistic conventions associated with heritage cinema. The particular elements of style that I will be highlighting will be visual style, mise-en-scène, costume and performance. As we will see, although the film generally operates within the parameters described by the Scottish cinema critics cited above, there is nonetheless a considerable degree of subtlety, sophistication and self-awareness to the way the film deploys heritage style to articulate national difference. In this regard I will strive to qualify McKechnie’s claim that the film ‘has clear stylistic heritage credentials: [its] pace, its camerawork and especially its visual style make it as much a continuation of the likes of *Howards End* [James Ivory, 1992] as it is of the royal bio-pic’ (2002, p. 228). Though there is a significant amount of what could be called standard heritage practice in the film’s

style, my analysis will show how the film uses such stylistic conventions to make a larger point. Once these strategies are fully appreciated, I will then to be able to read the play with difference thematically and then be able to arrive at a textually supportable understanding of the extent to which the film is mobilizing a national historical allegory that compares interestingly with its historical and production context.

2.3: Visual Style and Mise-en-scène: A 'Museum Aesthetic'

The first aspects of the film which I would like to examine here are the interrelated categories of visual style and mise-en-scène, aspects which, when taken together, can be usefully compared to what Dyer has called the 'museum aesthetic' of heritage films (1995, p. 204). Heritage film-making in the core works of the 1980s and 1990s is distinguished from much previous costume drama by its painstaking attention to period detail and historical accuracy in creating simulacra of the past through set design and costume. These meticulous recreations are then showcased through a particular camera style, one described succinctly by Higson, who says that in heritage films 'camerawork generally is fluid, artful and pictorialist, editing slow and undramatic. The use of long takes and deep focus, and long and medium shots rather than close-ups, produces a restrained aesthetic of display' (1996, pp. 233-234).

Such an aesthetic is present in *Mrs. Brown* and it is associated almost exclusively with the film's English characters. Victoria and her attendants, especially early in the film, are seen mainly in either interior shots in the decorous rooms of 'heritage' locations such as Balmoral or Osborne House, and when they do venture

out of doors they are seen in medium and long shots as they walk in the ornate gardens of either estate.

Brown, in contrast, is associated with the outdoors and with a *mise-en-scène* dominated by landscape photography. In his first appearance in the film, for example, he is framed against the rocky shores of the Isle of Wight complete with choppy seas lashing the coast. When he does appear in heritage spaces, Brown acts as a disruptive force. This can be seen in a sequence from early in the film when Brown, having offended the Queen with his frank comments about her emotional state, decides to force the Queen to make use of his services by waiting with the Queen's pony in the courtyard, an act which is viewed by the court as open disobedience and a breach of proper conduct. The sequence begins with the camera moving through the sculpted hedges and lawn ornaments of the garden and comes to follow several nurses and children, the group wanders through the garden until they meet Brown who is waiting with the pony. The interruption of courtly manners by Brown is represented by means of a marked break from the camera style which has been in usage for much of the sequence and the film as a whole, as the camera stops on Brown and moves in from a medium shot to a close-up of his and the pony's faces, depriving the viewer of the finery of the garden which customarily marks the heritage *mise-en-scène*.

Brown's effrontery is enough to disrupt other heritage settings, as seen when at this point in the sequence the Queen notices Brown standing in the garden. Framed against the backdrop of a hallway full of paintings and sculptures, the Queen is frozen in her tracks when she sees Brown and gazes out the window, taken aback at his behaviour. The usage of space here is very pointed in terms of generic convention. The scene follows a pattern Pidduck describes as common in costume drama, a pattern she calls the 'woman at the window', 'a generic spatio-temporal economy of

physical and sexual constraint' (2004. p. 26). Brown will later provide a source of sublimated sexual release for the Queen, but at this point it is important to see that *mise-en-scène* and camera style are the devices that mark him as the object of desire, the thing lacking in the Queen's life.

Another way in which Brown disrupts what would have been conventional heritage camera style is seen by the fact that all of the (very rare) occurrences of hand-held camera in the film – which are jolting within the context of the smooth, steady camera style of the film as a whole – coincide with Brown, whether he is running through the wilderness with a pistol or fighting with the ruffians in the stables at Balmoral. Such a camera styles corresponds to Brown's vigorousness and physicality which are juxtaposed with the stiffness and rigidity of his English counterparts. This can be seen in the film's matching swimming scenes in which we see first the Queen and then later Brown go swimming. In the first of these we see the Queen and the princesses, clad in very covering Victorian swimming costumes and filmed using static camera shots, go into the still, tranquil water. When we see Brown and Archie (Gerald Butler) go swimming, on the other hand, the photography switches to hand-held as the camera follows them as they leap naked into the choppy waters. The contrast between the two leads is clear: nudity and vigour on Brown's part versus restrictive dress and rigidity on the part of the Queen. What is important for our current purposes, however, is to note the differing camera style associated with each character. Recognizing this aspect of the film's style helps us to appreciate the ways in which the film uses visual style to subtly communicate changes in the characters and their relationship to one another from this point on.

As previously described in my discussion of the film's 'woman at the window' moment, longing and a corresponding suppression of motion are associated with the

film's presentation of the Queen. The extent to which Brown's dynamism is presented as desirable and indeed necessary in the film is encapsulated in its opening shots. Following the opening title cards which situate us historically and give us the biographical context necessary for understanding the film's plot, we see a bust falling in slow-motion from the edge of a castle. Such an opening immediately creates a sense of crisis for the monarchy as the heritage-esque sculpture cascades and crashes on the ground, shattering. This sense of crisis is amplified by the feeling that the bust must be that of Albert, as we have just been told of his recent death. (We later find out that is the sculpture of Brown that the Queen commissioned, and which Bertie [David Westhead] has destroyed in celebration of his death.) Then comes a jump-cut to Brown, identifiably Scottish as he is clad in his kilt, running through the night, pistol in hand. Cutting from slow motion to the hand-held, frenetic and disorienting camera work which characterizes the shots of Brown charging through the forest, creates a jarring effect, especially as a scene of such action would not be among the expectations of viewers watching a period costume drama in 1997. Brown shouts 'God save the Queen' and fires into the darkness, and we flash back to 1861 and the beginning of his and Victoria's story. With the sequence's foreboding tone and the image of this Scotsman rushing out in to the darkness to confront whatever force is supposed to be threatening the royal household, this sequence establishes the energy and vigour of Connolly's Brown as seemingly the only force protecting the monarchy.

As the film progresses, Brown's movement and energy will come to be portrayed as the antidote to the Queen's frozen, static crisis. A tentative first encounter takes place when Brown slowly leads the Queen away from the palace and into the woods. Both visual style – in this case, increased but steady movement as the camera swoops from above the house to follow the pair – and mise-en-scène, with

Brown and Victoria moving through the sculpted garden off into a less carefully tended copse in the woods, underscore the gradual movement of the Queen's affections towards Brown. The high point of their friendship later in the film comes as they ride through the Highland hills at Balmoral. The camera style here shows a nearly perfect, in the film's terms, synthesis between Brown's dynamism and the heritage concerns for displaying attractions as the camera sweeps through the Highland landscape following the pair at a greater speed than seen earlier and yet still with enough perspective to appreciate the grandeur of the landscape scenery which the film has associated with Brown. Later in the film, when we return to the scene showing Brown charging out into the darkness around Buckingham Palace, the same hand-held camera sequence from the film's opening, we see the balance in style has been lost as a series of disorienting, visually jarring shots create a sense of confusion and uncertainty. This mirrors Brown's mental state as his mania for protecting the Queen has consumed him and his energy, once the elixir for both he and the Queen, is now destroying him. As for the Queen, she was last seen before this sequence, sitting at the head of an ornate dining table unable to acknowledge Brown personally for saving her life. She has returned to the stasis from which Brown had tried to rescue her.

2.4: Tartanry and Heritage: *Mrs. Brown* as 'Kilt Movie'

As indicated by some of the disparaging nicknames for films of the heritage cycle listed by Higson (2003, p. 9) – 'frock flicks', 'bodice rippers' and 'white flannel films' – as well as the more neutral critical term 'costume drama', the films are most commonly associated with clothing, specifically the lavish and detailed costumes on

display in the films. *Mrs. Brown* is no exception to this generalization, but the usage of costume in the film, and indeed in many other heritage works, does not consist solely of presenting ornate costumes for viewers to admire. As several scholars, including Pam Cook (1996), Stella Bruzzi (1997) and Sarah Street (2001) have argued, costumes are best understood as not just the ‘eye candy’ in any given film, but instead as part of the aesthetic system of a film text, contributing to the process of making meaning just as much as editing, dialogue or any other element of film style does. Cook, in her case study of Britain’s Gainsborough melodramas, has linked uses of costume in period dramas to the ways in which films project images of national identity. Such an approach dovetails nicely with my current line of argument because, as she points out, tartanry, one of the regressive discourses much derided by the *Scotch Reels* critics, is a discourse that in visual terms is closely intertwined with dress and costume (1996, p. 29). McArthur picks up on the relationship between the film and the discourse of tartanry when he describes it as ‘one of those so-called “kilt films”’ and places it alongside works such as *Rob Roy* (Michael Caton-Jones, 1995) and *Braveheart* (2001, pp. 184-185). While I will have something to say about this grouping later in this chapter, for now I will be concerned with showing how Brown’s costume is used throughout the course of the film as well as the ways in which tartanry is mobilized by the film to set Brown apart from the English characters in the film.

The mere presence of the kilt in the film and its association with its hero is significant. Along with the Highland landscape shots which dominate the film’s mise-en-scène during the Balmoral sequences, the kilt has the film entering the iconographic space of tartanry. As discussed in the review of the literature, for many Scottish cultural critics this discourse has been described as an inauthentic and

regressive pattern of representation of the national culture. Tom Nairn, for instance, in his *The Break-Up of Britain* laments the ‘unbearable, crass, mindless philistinism’ of the tartan displays seen on international nights at London pubs (1981, p. 160). He has also commented on the persistence of the discourse and the relationship of that persistence to a very negative view of popular culture, saying that ‘Tartanry will not wither away, if only because it possesses the force of its own vulgarity’ (1981, p. 165). The usage of the kilt and the Highlands in *Mrs. Brown*, however, invests the discourse with significant dignity and respectability. Unlike their usage in films like *Local Hero* or *Shallow Grave*,³⁰ the tartan icons of Scottishness – the Highlands and kilts – are handled in *Mrs. Brown* without a hint of irony or subversion, instead they play a major part in the proud projection of national identity and difference.

Before going on to detail the manipulation of such an iconic costume during the film, it is worth pointing out the significant alteration to history made by screenwriter Jeremy Brock and director John Madden, one which demonstrates the deliberateness of the usage of costume in the film. A well-known trait of the real life Victoria was her love for all things Scottish and tartan. Dorothy Thompson, one of Victoria’s many biographers, describes the extent of this fascination:

Both Victoria and Albert were enchanted with the Highlands. The establishment at Balmoral of the royal residence helped to create a craze for all things tartan and Scottish. Visitors to the royal residences, especially Balmoral, were startled by the clashing tartans displayed in the domestic furnishings. The royal children appeared in public and in photographs and portraits dressed up in Highland costume - that is, in kilts with plaids and sporrans, frilly shirts and all the nineteenth-century trimmings. (2001, p. 54)

The film’s alteration to history, making Brown the only character to appear in a kilt although members of the royal family would have been dressed in such a manner at

the time, emphasises the extent to which the film-makers wanted to underscore Brown's status as a cultural outsider.

If one wanted to continue this line of pointing out historical inaccuracy in the film we could also turn to Hugh Trevor-Roper's seminal exposé of the history of the kilt. Here Trevor-Roper shows that despite its connotations of Highland Scottishness, the garment was invented by an Englishman and marketed to the English upper-classes during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ultimately becoming a very popular fashion item amongst the nobility and even the royal family. As he points out, kilts as we know them were never the garment of choice for the Scottish working-classes outside of service (1992, p. 22). Brown's statement in the film that he gets part of his salary for 'a pile of old tartan that [he'd] be wearing anyway' is thus another one of these inaccuracies. Even if Brock and Madden were not aware of the historical literature surrounding Victoria and Scottish fashion, other film versions of her life, including *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years* (Herbert Wilcox, 1939) do present the Englishmen in Victoria's court as wearing tartan. From what we know of Victoria's court, and about the history of the kilt itself, the differing costumes of the Queen's entourage and Brown are inventions of the film-makers, hoping to culturally polarize the characters at the level of costume. Such a polarization allows the film-makers another element of style with which to depict Victoria's growing closeness to Brown, as at the height of Brown's influence over the Queen, we see her clad in tartan at a ceilidh in Balmoral, an image which is so easy to read that it is no surprise to see that it graces the cover of the film's DVD release.

Once we realize the deliberateness of the costume assignation in the film, we can appreciate its nuanced manipulation. Over the course of the film we only see Brown not wearing a kilt on four occasions: once he is seen nude while swimming

(itself an important costume choice), and on three occasions he is seen in trousers. One of these trouser-wearing scenes occurs during a horseback riding trip Brown and Victoria take shortly after Victoria moves to Balmoral. Here the costuming choice of trousers for Brown serves a pragmatic function as the kilt would not be well chosen for the rigours of riding a galloping horse through the Highland terrain, and the relative unimportance of the costuming change is underscored by the fact that we see only fleeting glimpses of Brown's legs in the scene. A second scene is so brief as to be nearly imperceptible as Brown is seen going into the horse stable in trousers.

The third trouser-wearing moment, however, does feature a very thematically pointed avoidance of the kilt. This comes late in the film after Disraeli (Anthony Sher) has prevailed upon Brown to take action and convince the Queen to return to public duties and, by so doing, stem the growing tide of Republicanism which threatens the Tory government as well as, Brown is led to believe, the Queen's reign. Arguing with Victoria over whether or not he has betrayed her by suggesting she answer parliament's calls to return to public duty, Brown appears indoors in trousers instead of his customary kilt. Making a pained plea that the audience knows he does not want to make, Brown's costume here suggests a newfound alliance with the English members of the court who have throughout the film been trying to coax the Queen into such a return. Brown's discomfort at having to assume such a position is underscored by his seemingly awkward movements in the trousers, an awkwardness which is amplified by the jarring effect that his alien appearance has to an audience which is, at this point, unaccustomed to seeing Brown dressed in such a fashion. The growing distance between the characters is clear when at the end of the argument Victoria chastises Brown for referring to her as 'woman,' something which he has done throughout the film, saying 'Do not presume to speak to your Queen in such a

manner.’ This answer is one of rigidly formal language and is spoken by Dench in a tone of voice that is regal and condescending, far from the intimate tones that characterized the pair’s conversations up to this point. With such a dramatic moment achieved by the filmmakers through usage of dress and performance, the scene presents an opportune segue to the next and final textual aspect I would like to discuss here, that of acting and star persona.

2.5: Dame Judi and the Big Yin: Performance and Persona in *Mrs. Brown*

Discussing the issue of ‘quality’ in public service broadcasting, Charlotte Brunsdon has noted that televised costume drama, which *Mrs. Brown* began as, is a programming format that has ‘come to figure [...] as the acme of British quality’ (1990, p. 85). Writing specifically about the Granada serials *The Jewel in the Crown* and *Brideshead Revisited*, Brunsdon notes the importance of casting certain types of actors in lending such dramas an air of ‘quality.’ She terms this aspect of the dramas ‘the best of British acting’: ‘the presence of name theatrical actresses and actors’ which ‘adds the international dimension of British theatre to the programmes’ (1990, p. 85). *Mrs. Brown* adheres to this convention by virtue of Judi Dench’s casting and performance as Victoria as well as the casting of other British theatrical actors in supporting roles, such as Anthony Sher (who plays a memorable Disraeli) and Geoffrey Palmer (who plays Ponsonby). Though this was Dench’s first leading role in the cinema, it came after a long career on the English stage and in television, most notably on the sitcom *As Time Goes By* (1992). Dench had also played a number of supporting roles in canonical heritage films such as *A Room With A View* (James Ivory, 1987) and *A Handful of Dust* (Charles Sturridge, 1988). Such a career has led

Higson to include her amongst his list of the repertory players of heritage cinema in Britain (2003, p. 30) (a group which also includes Geoffrey Palmer), and led to an appointment as Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1985. This title has since been taken up frequently by the journalistic media in reviewing her work, as she is now commonly known as ‘Dame Judi.’

Whereas the English characters are played by theatrically trained actors, Brown is played by Billy Connolly, a casting decision which draws on Connolly’s persona as a working-class Scottish comedian who is widely known to have worked in a shipyard before moving into the world of comedy. In light of his persona as an outspoken, ultra-masculine Scot, and his large stature, which taken together has earned him the nickname ‘the Big Yin,’ and his career as an often obscene comedian, Connolly’s casting alongside Dench is a very significant one for the allegorical reading of the film which I am putting forward. The pairing of Dench, arch-English stage actress, and Connolly, arch-Scottish masculine actor, lends the film an international, class-crossing character. Such can be seen in the press coverage of an altercation at the film’s Edinburgh Film Festival premier involving Connolly and a reporter from a Scottish newspaper. Reports on the incident invariably mention that the incident occurred in front of ‘Dame’ Judi Dench, implying shockingly inappropriate behaviour on the part of Connolly in front of such a regal personality as Dench (e.g. Bradshaw, 1997, p. 13). The pairing also brings an element of pan-Britishness to the film, as noted by one reviewer who describes the two actors as showing ‘two sides of the same coin - the heads and tails of the kingdom’ (Walker, 1997, p. 27).

In the film, the contrast in the personae of the respective actors translates into contrasting performance styles. Again we can look to generic conventions to describe

and explain this difference. Caughie gives a particularly insightful description of the appeal of acting in costume drama, and one that is apropos of Dench's Victoria, when he writes of the

[P]leasure in watching performance rather than the more seductive pleasure of losing oneself in the fantasy of identification: a pleasure in the observation of the details of gesture and inflection, in watching skill with the relaxed judgement detachment and critical judgement which Brecht associates with the aficionado of boxing... (2000, p. 224)

The kind of showy acting that Caughie sees as characterizing performances such as Peggy Aschcroft's in *The Jewel in the Crown* also characterizes Dench's performance in *Mrs. Brown*. One such instance that is brief enough to discuss here is the scene in which Victoria seeks out the advice of the Dean of Windsor (Oliver Ford Davies) about the guilt she feels over her relationship with Brown. For reasons of rank and title, the Queen cannot speak directly to the Dean regarding her mixed feelings of attraction to Brown and guilt towards Albert's memory. So Dench must communicate this subtext through the somewhat opaque dialogue that allows Victoria to avoid speaking directly. The conflicting feelings apparent when Dench's voice catches in her throat while saying that she has 'come to rely more on the comfort of living friends' are moving to the audience in that they are able to both appreciate the extent of emotional repression the Queen is feeling, but are also able to delight in Dench's ability to convey so much with these slight gestures and modulations of voice, to dab her eyes with a handkerchief when we realize her character must want to break down sobbing. It is little wonder then that Dench received the BAFTA and Golden Globe awards for Best Actress and was nominated for an Oscar in the same category: not only is her performance highly skilled, but the film's appeal is largely based on it, something Miramax chief Harvey Weinstein was very aware of as he aggressively

campaigned for the film and Dench individually to be nominated for Oscars (Higson, 2003, p. 7).³¹

Billy Connolly's performance as Brown on the other hand, is seemingly not marked by the subtlety or nuance found in the performances of the English actors. Petrie says of the film's acting styles that Connolly's 'energetic performance' overshadows 'the *longeurs*' of 'typical heritage style' (2000a, p. 212). McKechnie also notes this divide in performance styles, saying 'There is a very poignant contrast between the refined southern English courtiers and the ruddy Scotsman, who "speaks as he finds" and seems to be the embodiment of [quoting Robert Burns] "the honest man, tho' e'er sae poor, [who is] King o' Men, for a' that"' (2002, p. 229). Leaving aside the tartanry-charged usage of Burns by McKechnie, there is much truth in these characterizations, especially when it comes to contrasting Englishness and Scottishness. Brown says exactly what's on his mind and, although it initially shocks the Queen, it ultimately charms her and leads to the casual intimacy between the two. The extent to which this is presented by the film as a Scottish character trait is seen early in the film when Brown's brother Archie warns him about his lack of manners in directly addressing the Queen. Brown defends his speaking out of turn at the first meeting with the Queen in the film, saying 'I speak as I find Archie'; Archie responds, 'Not down South you don't John'. Brown's bluntness and often boisterous tone of voice also highlight a class divide which accompanies the cultural divide between the Scottish and English in the film. It is a symptom of Brown's Highland, working-class masculinity in the film that he cannot conform to the world of polite English upper-class society, even though his brother apparently has.

But this is only part of Connolly's performance as Brown. Just as there is a play in the film with dress so that Brown appears uncomfortable in the dress of the

English so does he at times poignantly struggle to express himself in the formal dialogue that characterizes courtly communication. One instance of this comes when Brown attempts to resign his post following the scandal caused by his alleged involvement in a drunken fight; another comes when he must assume a 'stiff upper lip' when hearing his work in stopping an assassination attempt denigrated by Bertie. At these moments we see that, despite the blunt directness that has characterized his performance to this point and which has been the subject of most of the commentary on that performance, Connolly is still capable of considerable subtlety as he pointedly struggles with the formal language that accompanies a submission of a letter of resignation to the Queen. The difference between the performances is thus not that Connolly's lacks skill or subtlety. It is that because of his persona, he is not recognized for it in the way that Dench has been.

Section 3: Empire, Union and Ambivalent Nostalgia: Historical and Political Contexts for *Mrs. Brown*

3.1: Heritage and History: Interpreting the Past, Commenting on the Present

Having established how the film mobilizes both textual and intertextual generic conventions of costume drama to project cultural difference within Britain and, at points, to suggest a balance between those cultures, I will now turn to issues of history and its representation in the film. As the film takes Scotland's role in the British national past as one of its explicit subjects, more so than any film of the so-called new Scottish cinema period, I would be remiss if I did not examine exactly how that national past is imagined and what relevance that has for the time in which it was

produced, a period that is described by all as one of momentous political change for Britain and Scotland.

One of the most pervasive criticisms of the heritage cycle of the Thatcher years was that it failed to engage critically with history or to offer any substantial commentary on the present day. Hill sums up the positions of those criticizing the political disengagement of heritage cinema with the present when he writes about the initial debates regarding heritage culture in the late 1980s: 'Heritage culture is often regarded as a form of retreat from the present, providing satisfactions which the present does not provide or compensation for what it lacks' (1999, p. 74). But later commentators on the genre have taken up the position that heritage does comment on the present, if only to attack the way in which it does so. Monk notes that because of its mapping of national identity onto the trials and tribulations of upper-class characters, heritage cinema, like heritage culture at large, was accused of 'promot[ing] a false notion of historical reality' (2002, p. 179). This is among the complaints that McArthur has about *Mrs. Brown*: that despite its projection of a complimentary sort of Scottish heritage, its claims about the relationship between Brown and Victoria 'actually confirm [the Scots'] subjection' (2001, p. 185). In this section of the chapter I will take up the historical ramifications of the film's depiction of this relationship and then attempt to consider that depiction in relation to the political context of devolution in Britain. As we will see this depiction is more ambivalent than McArthur suggests, though his postcolonial reading is not entirely inappropriate for the film.

3.2: Adapting History in *Mrs. Brown*

An examination of the interpretation of history in *Mrs. Brown* does well to begin with some account of the 'history' it takes as its subject. The film centres on a longstanding rumour that Queen Victoria, who lent her name to an age renowned for its sexual repression, had a longstanding love affair with her Scottish ghillie during a lengthy period of mourning for her late husband Prince Albert. Though Victoria is of course a well known figure in British history, her relationship with Brown has remained relatively opaque to historians and obscure to the lay person. Commenting on the selection of this particular relationship for the subject of the film, and its treatment by the film-makers, McKechnie notes that 'the way [the film's] love story is foregrounded over the "demands" of history and biography takes advantage of gaps in historical recording. *Mrs. Brown* does not take its historical responsibility lightly; but rather than merely reproducing, it interprets' (2002, p. 228). Indeed much of the journalistic coverage of the film, both in the UK and abroad, included some explication of the gap in the historical accounts of Brown and Victoria's relationship which the film uses as its point of departure (e.g. Janusonis, 1997, p. E-6; Wakefield, 1997, p. 26). Because not many viewers would have been aware of the John Brown controversy, much less of its particular details, the film-makers would not have faced the sort of pedantic nit-picking in the name of 'accuracy' that usually accompanies the reception of historical biopics; more importantly, few viewers will find discrepancies troublesome enough to distract them from the film's narrative. At the same time, however, the film can claim to make a statement on an actual historical controversy, suggesting that Victoria and Brown shared a very passionate, but in the end chaste friendship. Crucially, given the BBC's public service ethos, it can also claim to be an 'educational' film, informing the public regarding about obscure events in the life of an otherwise well known monarch.

Embedded in this interpretation of the life of a British monarch is a foregrounding of the role that a Scottish servant played at a moment of great historical importance, heroically forgoing his own wishes, sacrificing his closest friendship and by doing so, saving the monarchy. Even if Brown is only provoked into doing so by the unscrupulous Disraeli, and even if Disraeli acts only out of self-interest, the film nonetheless presents the preservation of the monarchy as a good thing. This is underscored by the sweeping parliamentary address by Disraeli which follows the Queen's decree that Brown will be given an award for devoted service. As Victoria solemnly reflects on Brown's service and Brown himself is seen stoically accepting his fate to be relegated to the shadows, the film moves to Disraeli's swelling oration praising the decision to keep the monarchy intact, ending on the words 'power and glory' whilst the parliament erupts in applause.

3.3: Devolution in/and *Mrs. Brown*

Brown's noble action of self-denial and loyalty takes on a particular importance when one considers the film's own historical context, as the political concerns of Great Britain in 1997 are writ large in the text of *Mrs. Brown*. Chapman and McKechnie point to the travails of the current monarchy as being the film's main objects of contemporary commentary (Chapman, 2005, pp. 315-316; McKechnie 2002, p. 219), but the film can also be productively seen in light of other contemporary British historical contexts, specifically in terms of the movement towards political devolution, which culminated in a second referendum in 1997, the year of the film's release. Knowing such a movement was in the air, Victoria's angry reaction when she learns of the ecclesiastical 'devolution' of Ireland ('The Irish must

be told very firmly to stay exactly where they are. It's the thin end of the wedge Mr. Disraeli. The next thing you will be telling me is that I no longer rule this nation') takes on a special resonance, especially as the nation being referred could be interpreted as Scotland, given that she is still at Balmoral when she says this.

In fact, simply choosing to make a film about Queen Victoria at this time could be seen as a significant statement in light of the movement towards devolution in Scotland and a similar groundswell of nationalist sentiment in Wales. It was Victoria after all who presided over the unprecedented expansion of the Empire abroad and who attempted to use her influence to create a truly 'united kingdom.' These efforts included the purchase of estates in Scotland and the Isle of Wight, the designation of the future king as the Prince of Wales, the granting of her children symbolic dukedoms throughout Great Britain (e.g. the Dukes of Cornwall and Edinburgh), and starting a popular craze for all things tartan and Highland. For all of this, Victoria was a sovereign who, more than most others, is associated with trying to spread the monarchy throughout the kingdom (Richards, 1997, p. 8). An invocation of her legacy at such a point in history thus recalls a united Great Britain at a moment which some would consider to be the precipice of its irrevocable break-up. This invocation is especially resonant when the film's narrative presents a pan-British historical allegory which positions Scotsman Brown as the force that gets Victoria back to her public duties and in effect saves the monarchy from the threat of Republicanism.³²

3.4: Unionist Nostalgia or a History of Alienation?

Though the film presents Brown and the Queen as forgoing their private desires for the public good, there is still some ambivalence about the treatment of Brown at the hands of the British establishment. The view that the film projects of Brown as noble in his self-sacrifice can also be seen as supporting a postcolonial reading of his role in Victoria's life and reign. In order to develop this reading we can begin by returning to McArthur's comments on the film which compare Brown to the 'house nigger' of slavery stories and in which McArthur argues that the film is an 'ideological con trick' and says that Brown's apparent high standing in Victoria's court serves to mask a 'discourse that confirms [the Scots'] subjection' (2001, pp. 185-186). There is much in the film to support McArthur's view of the film. The physical vigour of Brown, represented by the numerous shots of his naked or bruised body, can be seen as the by-now recognizable erotic subject of the colonizer's (the Queen's) gaze. In this respect, Neely is correct to make a parallel between the film and those of the so-called Raj revival of the 1980s, in which imperial history was represented sexually through various permutations of colonizer and colonized (2005, p. 244). Even the word 'noble' which I have used in describing Brown, is in postcolonial circles all too easily linked with 'savage'. Such a view of the film would interpret Brown's sacrifice as one procured through the Machiavellian trickery of Disraeli and subsequently historically suppressed through the intervention of the equally Marchiavellian members of court.

Any critical reading of the film along these lines is problematized, however, by the melodramatic pull of Brown's deathbed scene. When Victoria comes to see Brown on his deathbed she offers what the film presents as a heartfelt apology for her neglect of Brown in the intervening years since the stay at Balmoral and says that she is desperate at the thought of losing him. The tenderness with which this scene is

filmed and acted, with rising music, soft candlelight, and Dench's teary eyes, presents the apology as genuine. Though it cannot be said to cancel out all of the colonially charged images we have seen to this point, the deathbed apology does illustrate the fact that the film wants to show Brown's devotion to the Queen as something that was recognized and appreciated – not simply disregarded by a capricious, egocentric ruler – and finally as justified and rewarded, despite the final act of betrayal by Ponsonby that keeps the truth about Brown and the Queen from ever being known. Brown really was Victoria's best friend, as he somewhat pitifully argued to Archie, and his sacrifice was appreciated. Whether or not it is received as such will vary by the viewer, but at least the film is trying to make us believe as much.

The nationalist allegory I have suggested underpins the film is presented then as one of nobility, not subjection, one made from a point-of-view we can roughly call Unionist. That the film is attempting to engage with such issues is of great historical significance. Within the body of work now known as the 'new Scottish cinema', this is the only film to deal explicitly with devolution. Though David Martin-Jones (2005a, 2005b) has argued that films such as *Orphans*, *Regeneration* and *The Last Great Wilderness* reflect English and Scottish national anxieties regarding devolution, *Mrs. Brown* is the only film that actually attempts to represent it, even if that representation is projected onto the past. Since Petrie's original narrative of new Scottish cinema culminates with the cinematic achievements of *Ratcatcher* and *Orphans* coinciding with the establishment of the devolved Scottish Parliament (2000a, p. 191), suggesting a link between the two, *Mrs. Brown* deserves more in-depth attention than it has heretofore received for dealing with the issue at all. This relative lack of attention may be explained by the anti-devolutionary stance that the film takes. After all, in the context of a movement that has been described as one

towards national political and representational sovereignty, a film that can be perceived to be celebrating Unionism and, with its unashamed tartanry, revels in what most Scottish cinema critics would call ‘incorrect’ Scottishness, is somewhat troublesome from a historian’s point-of-view. This is especially the case when that film found such a large audience at home and abroad. It is with such an understanding of the film that we can now return to its production context.

Section 4: What Public Service?: Policy Issues and *Mrs. Brown*

In this final portion of the chapter I will be concerned with revisiting *Mrs. Brown*’s status as a product of a public service broadcaster and contemplating the significance of some of the issues raised above in light of such a production context. In what ways are the changing goals of public service broadcasting realized by *Mrs. Brown*? What does the film’s circulation and reception at home and abroad tell us about the role that public service broadcasters such as BBC Scotland have played in Scottish cinema? These will be the questions I will be concerned with in this part of the chapter. As we will see, some of the answers to these questions will in turn bring us back to the thesis’s core issues surrounding policy, the market and the position of Scottish cinema within the global film economy.

4.1: Engaging With Scottish Cultural Heritage

As I hope to have shown above, *Mrs. Brown* is not only the story of one of Britain’s most iconic monarchs, but also that of an important Scottish figure whose exact story remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. Such an understanding of the film

is important not only for appreciating one of the public service oriented achievements of the film. Despite the generally obscure details of his life, Brown is a figure with some cultural caché in Scotland, but he is also one that, in a way which mirrors his removal from history in the film, remains marginalized within British film representations of history. The two major biopics of Victoria before *Mrs. Brown*, Herbert Wilcox's *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years*, both relegate Brown (played by Gordon McLeod in both films) to a small role in which he appears to be no more significant than any of the Queen's (Anna Neagle in both films) other servants. Victoria's biographers likewise have mainly downplayed any rumours of an affair between the two and kept commentary on one of the central figures in Victoria's court to a minimum. Dulcie Ashdown devotes three pages out of two hundred of her biography of the monarch to giving an account of Brown (1975, pp. 129-132); Lytton Strachey provides his version of the life of Brown in three pages of his three hundred page biography of Victoria (1921, pp. 271-274).

Other attempts to bring the story to the screen, including one that would have had Sean Connery playing Brown opposite Julie Christie as Victoria, were reportedly scuppered by the Royal Family as they threatened to bar the film-makers from using royal palaces as locations for shooting (Flynn, 1997, p. 24). The significance of getting this story of a famous Scotsman onto the screen is thus one that should not be underestimated. Going by Connolly's description of Brown's reputation within Scotland, we should take note of the 'lowest common denominator' description that he gives that reputation: 'In Scotland he's loved. He's looked on as "One of our guys nailed the Queen, yes!"', one newspaper story quotes him as saying (Bickelhaupt and Dezell, 1997, p. E2). This aspect of the film's historical interpretation, which runs counter to that particular version of Brown's reputation, brings to the fore not only

issues of 'quality' in the sense of tastefulness, but also, within the Scottish context, the issue of market failure and correction, an issue to which I now turn.

4.2: Market Failure and Representing Scotland: Heritage and 'Garbage'

Another important historical context for *Mrs. Brown* is one that has less to do with political history and more to do with film history. With its status as a costume drama in the Merchant-Ivory mould, with the attendant connotations of taste and decorum and its usage of traditional representational discourses, the film's place in the history of Scottish film representations is also important to consider. As intimated above, by the late 1990s, *Mrs. Brown*'s insistence on a tartan vision of Scotland is a bit anachronistic. Non-ironic usage of kilts and Highland vistas would have appeared to be somewhat passé in 1997, following the success of culturally iconoclastic films such as *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*. These films forever changed the way Scotland is imagined on the screen, particularly amongst international audiences. Suddenly kilts were not the only images associated with Scotland, and this came much to the dismay of some. If the worry amongst Scottish cultural critics once was that the nation would be too much known as the land of *Brigadoon*, following the international success of *Trainspotting*, the fear was, especially amongst Scottish tourism interests, that the world would perceive the nation as being plagued with crime and drug addiction; that instead of the Highlands, one would imagine Scotland in terms of the urban squalor depicted in films like *Ratcatcher* and *Small Faces*, or in the best-selling novels of Irvine Welsh and Ian Rankin (Nash, 1998, p. 286).

This goes for the style and tone of the film as well as its content. As opposed to the amorality of (anti)hero Mark Renton (Ewan McGregor) in *Trainspotting*,

Brown is a hero because he does his duty, and this is a conscious interpretation of a controversial historical figure by the film-makers. To return to Brown's reputation as Connolly describes it, it hardly needs pointing out that *Mrs. Brown* does not interpret the figure in this way. Again, Connolly explains the film's conception of Brown: 'I don't think he [slept with Victoria]. [...] He was a servant for twenty-five years, and his father was one before him. He knew the rules; he knew not to cross that line' (Alberge, 1997). Though we cannot take Connolly's account as necessarily reflecting the views of the Scottish nation as a whole, his usage of this anecdote in promoting the film (it crops up in other interviews with he and Dench³³), tells us that the perception was meant to be communicated to the film's audience.

Framed in such a way, Brown is not the class and culture bounding Lothario that Connolly describes as being the historical Brown's popular persona in Scotland, nor is he the rude, mean-spirited alcoholic which some of Victoria's biographers have described him as. For the sake of comparison, one could easily imagine how the story of Brown and Victoria could have been handled by writers like Irvine Welsh and *Trainspotting* screenwriter John Hodge. Viewed in such a context, the conscious effort to evoke stylistic 'quality' and the fusion of tartan dress and Scottish working-class masculinity with a narrative arc which associates duty, self-sacrifice and knowing one's place, has the film assuming the historical role of attempting to reinscribe a certain 'tasteful' vision of Scotland and Scots into the popular imagination. There is no toilet-diving in *Mrs. Brown* and the heroic act of its protagonist is putting duty ahead of personal gain, a far cry from the climactic act of betrayal in *Trainspotting*. We thus see competing views of Scotland and Scottishness, disparate visions described astutely by Murray Smith as those of 'heritage' on the one hand and 'garbage' on the other (2002, p. 25). Given the emphasis on the latter in

Scottish cultural production during this period, the evocation of 'heritage' through such a high-profile film is, in its own restrained way, quite a bold statement indeed.

Neely discusses this aspect of Scotland's film and television output through a discussion of heritage cinema's role as 'cultural ambassador' and writes that works such as *Mrs. Brown*, *Rob Roy* and *Monarch of the Glen* acted in such a capacity (2005, p. 245). While I agree with Neely's general framework, I would argue that in fact only *Mrs. Brown* amongst these works acts as a heritage 'cultural ambassador.' Though *Rob Roy* and especially *Braveheart* have had an enormous impact on Scottish tourism, their generic status as action films with a wholly different set of generic conventions distinguishes them from the Masterpiece Theatre/Merchant-Ivory sort of tasteful products that are associated with quality costume drama. As for *Monarch*, the fact that it remains a television series also inhibits its comparison to *Mrs. Brown*. Though they share a common production context, even having been made by the same company as Neely points out (2005, p. 243), their distribution contexts are crucial: whether justified or not, the aura of quality that theatrical distribution has outstrips that of television. In the media climate of the 1990s, and even still today, 'Oscar buzz' is a prestigious brand to which television simply does not have access. A work's ability to act as cultural ambassador is infinitely magnified within such a context. Thus *Mrs. Brown* is in terms of production and distribution the only true 'heritage' cultural ambassador for Scotland during this period.

4.3: Export Pressures and the Ownership of Scottish Film and Television

This position as cultural ambassador raises a number of other issues related to export, issues which often arise not only in relation to British costume drama film-

making but also British television in the age of increasing co-production with American television partners. As Monk has shown, much of the critical animosity at 'heritage' films was based explicitly upon the films' success in export – particularly American – markets, to the extent that costume dramas which were not successful abroad were spared the pejorative label of 'heritage film' (2002, p. 180). Such a critical reaction echoes that found within the critical literature on the BBC and the export of British television discussed above, particularly in the case of Caughie's writing on costume drama. But, while there is no disputing Caughie's assertions about the popularity of British costume drama amongst American audiences, writers in this vein seem to overlook the fact that such representations are considerably popular within Britain as well, and the works thus do not look the way that they do just because of these co-production agreements, even if they undoubtedly do increase the pragmatic pressures on those involved in making such dramas.

In her study of British television exports, Steemers agrees that such pressures exist, but her example of American intervention in the production of British costume dramas is hardly alarming from a cultural point-of-view, this being the intervention of WGBH's executive producer Rebecca Eaton asking the British producers of *Persuasion* (Roger Michell, 1995) – another film which the BBC opted to distribute theatrically – to have the film's romantic leads kiss at the film's climax. This suggestion, according to Steemers, was greeted apprehensively by the British producers who felt it would have been anachronistic as people in the time that the film was set would not have kissed publicly. For her part, Steemers acknowledges that this change probably made the film better (2004, p. 115). What this example shows is not that anxieties over the export pressures British television are pedantic and foolish, but rather that export pressures have not been shown to have negatively affected the

capacity of costume dramas to cater to British tastes and sensibilities. In all likelihood, many British viewers, like Steemers, agreed with what Eaton suggested. When it comes to the export of British film, Street has shown that there is no easy distinction between indigenous and exportable pleasures in films (2002, p. 221), and a similar thing can be said about the content of British costume drama made for television.

But such objections to the increasing involvement of American producers are not necessarily creatively-minded fears as much as they are objections on principle to who exactly British television (and, by extension, film) are made for. The assumption in much national cinema study is that national cinema is meant to serve the domestic culture first and foremost (Street, 2002, p. 3), and such can also be said to be the case with national television production. In the realm of television drama, Steemers writes of such a tension existing, pointing particularly to costume drama that is more popular abroad than at home (2004, p. 33), but based on the evidence available this was not the case with *Mrs. Brown*. Though the film attracted more admissions in the US than in Britain (1.8 million in the US compared to 900,000 in Britain [Lumiere Database, 2007]), the proportional audiences in each nation shows that a higher percentage of Britons saw the film at the cinema than did Americans (14.93 per thousand of Britons compared to 6.61 per thousand in the US [Lumiere Database, 2007]); in fact, the film was relatively speaking a bigger hit in the UK than any other national market in North America and Europe. This is before taking into account the film's audiences on television, where the film, like all BBC Films productions, has been regularly broadcast in the UK.

Conclusion: BBC Scotland and the Funding of Scottish National Cinema

I hope to have demonstrated a number of things with this chapter. all of which must now be brought together if we are to press ahead with the larger project of reckoning with the effect of various forms of film policy on Scottish national cinema. *Mrs. Brown*, I have argued, is a film that, in a manner intricately related to heritage aesthetics, seeks to establish a polarity between Scottishness and Englishness. This articulation of national and cultural difference was shown to give way to a loose allegory depicting Scottishness as the saviour of the British Crown during a time of royal crisis. Given the film's references to devolutionary pressures during Victoria's reign and its own production in the shadow of the second devolution referendum in Scotland, I argued that the film offers an ambivalent view on the historical relationship between Scotland and Britain, one that represents the devolutionary tensions of the period more than any other film in the new Scottish canon. Finally, I sought to consider the ways in which *Mrs. Brown* ran counter to the representations of Scotland that dominated the screens around the time of its release, reasserting a certain tasteful vision of the nation that distinguished it from the bleak squalor of *Trainspotting* and similar representations.

But how does this all relate to the commissioning activities of BBC Scotland, itself a devolved institutional body? In *Mrs. Brown* we have a film that explores Scottish cultural history, offers a fresh viewpoint on Scotland in light of contemporary representations, and was successful in reaching local and international audiences - all while managing to reflect and comment upon a time of momentous political change in Great Britain. It is also a film which, with its royal story and casting of Dench alongside Connolly, can be said to have pan-British, cross-class appeal while still possessing the traditional textual markers of 'quality', making it popular with critics

and winning it prestigious nominations and awards. All of these facts point to the film as being exemplary of public service broadcasting in the late-1990s mould.

As a brief comment on the continuing convergence of television and film in Britain, it is worth pointing out how the film shows another instance of such convergence. As I quoted him above, Hill particularly has asserted that the film industry in Britain could benefit from the injection of the public service tradition into film-funding decisions. Though one suspects Hill was thinking of more overtly stylistically innovative and politically left-wing films such as *My Beautiful Laundrette*,³⁴ his prediction could be seen as appropriate to the economics of film and television in Britain generally. In some ways it makes perfect sense that Channel 4 and BBC Films are the biggest players in the British film industry, which has seen numerous 'cross-over' successes throughout the 1980s and 1990s: there is a sense in which public service during this period has itself become a term with the idea of 'crossing over' at its heart. The films which seek to be mainstream enough to reach audiences on a large scale while also dealing with historical and cultural issues would fit perfectly into programming schedules, as they would into cinemas at home and abroad, as they would into government reports giving examples of public service broadcasting. Costume drama, which Steemers cites as a type of production that is perceived to fit easily into public service requirements while still holding some audience appeal (2004, p. 33) and which Higson describes in similar terms of achieving critical prestige and audience appeal (2003, pp. 123-127), is a particularly prominent example of this convergence, but a similar set of aesthetic and industrial strategies can be seen across British and Scottish cinema generally during this period, and indeed stretching back at least to *Chariots of Fire* and *Local Hero*. *Mrs. Brown* shows this to be the case and in the next chapter we can see how similar impulses

underpinned an attempt at representing multiculturalism in Scotland, raising a different set of issues in relation to policy and film-making in, as well as the influence of foreign markets on, Scottish cinema.

Chapter 4: Bringing Diversity to Scottish Cinema: *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat*

Introduction: Policy, ‘Diversity’ and Scottish Cinema

In the course of analysing the rhetoric of cultural policy, Jim McGuigan cites ‘diversity’ along with ‘identity, creativity and participation’, as terms that often seem to be ‘buzzwords’ without clear referents. Given this apparent lack of referent, he finds usage of the term ‘diversity’ in policy discourse to be ‘fine and inoffensive but curiously insubstantial’ (2004, pp. 101-102). Calls for diversity and participation have long characterized film and media policy in Britain, and public institutions have been seen by some historians and critics as having the potential to create a space for minority artists which would not otherwise exist if film industries are not protected from market forces.³⁵ Unlike its English counterpart, Scottish cinema cannot point to a film with the visibility or critical acclaim of such films as *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears, 1985) or *East is East* (Damien O’Donnell, 1999) as evidence of policy having produced tangible results in terms of representing ‘diversity’ on the screen. Or can it? In this chapter I will examine two very different contemporary filmic treatments of the Scottish-Asian experience as possible answers to the call for greater diversity in Scottish film culture: Ken Loach’s *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004) and the Hindi-language ‘Bollywood’³⁶ film *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* (Rajiv Rai, 2001) (henceforth *PIAM*). Both of these films were supported in some capacity by Scottish institutions, with Scottish Screen and to a lesser extent the Glasgow Film Office providing production subsidies to the former and Scottish Screen Locations and the Glasgow Film Office having helped to facilitate the production of the latter. Insofar as

is possible I would like to take up McGuigan's claims regarding the emptiness of such terms as 'diversity' in policy discourse by treating these films as tangible referents for the seemingly vague rhetoric of policy. I hope to accomplish this by examining each film in terms of institutional intention and textual and extratextual results. Though each analysis will lead me in sharply different directions, by considering the two films together under the same rubric we will be able to forge a more expansive understanding of the various outcomes of policy for multiculturalism and national cinema in Scotland.

The two analyses will also continue many of the themes apparent throughout the case studies in this thesis, whilst introducing a few new ones that dovetail with the thesis's core concerns. As was the case with *Local Hero* and will be with the remainder of the case studies in this thesis, *Ae Fond Kiss* raises a number of issues regarding authorship and its relationship to national cinema through the figure of Ken Loach. *PIAM* continues a theme that could be termed 'incorrect Scottishness' with the way it depicts the nation. The idea of 'crossing-over' will shown to be central to both films, though in different senses of the term in each case. As we will see, *Ae Fond Kiss* can be said to have been aesthetically and economically affected by the desire of the film-makers to reach mainstream audiences. *PIAM*, on the other hand, slightly preceded an emerging phenomenon which has seen Hindi-language Indian films 'crossing over' to find larger and larger audiences within Britain. In a related vein, both films also raise the problem of where national cinema can be located in relation to textual address as well as the audiences that consume the films (*PIAM* in relation to India and South Asia, *Ae Fond Kiss* equally pointedly to Europe and European audiences). Finally, both cases present us with instances where policy interacted with the contemporary global film economy in ways that were perhaps unanticipated by

those who drew up the measures from which each film benefited, but which are very prescient for ongoing trends in both British film policy and the international media markets generally. These similarities will become apparent as the chapter proceeds and by its conclusion I hope to have convincingly argued that both films can be considered to have contributed positively to Scottish film culture despite their problematic elements in terms of national classification that occur in both cases.

Section 1: *Ae Fond Kiss*: Ken Loach, Policy and the Importing of National Cinema

Ae Fond Kiss marks the sixth collaborative effort between English director Ken Loach and Scottish screenwriter Paul Laverty and the fourth of these projects to be set in Scotland, the other three being *Carla's Song* (1996), *My Name is Joe* (1998), and *Sweet Sixteen* (2002). *Ae Fond Kiss* has been described by Laverty and Loach as comprising the third part of a trilogy of films set in western Scotland, with the first two being *My Name is Joe* and *Sweet Sixteen* (I will have more to say about the designation of the three films as a 'trilogy' shortly). The film itself tells the story of a romance between Casim (Atta Yaqub), a Glaswegian Muslim of Pakistani descent, and Roisin (Eva Birthistle), an Irish immigrant teaching at a Catholic comprehensive school. As the film is simultaneously a film about cultural conflict in contemporary Scotland, a part of the oeuvre of one of auteur director Ken Loach, and a film produced with public funds which were provided with a certain agenda, we must carefully work through each of these important contexts before we can assess how the film acts in the context of Scottish national cinema. In beginning this analysis we will

start with the figure of Ken Loach, whose authorial presence, as we will see, has influenced every aspect of the film's production, promotion and reception.

1.1: Ken Loach, Socially Critical Realism and British Cinema Historiography

Ken Loach occupies a singular place not only in the British film industry, where he is one of the last practitioners of overtly politically-engaged social realism, but also in British cinema historiography, where his work has for some become associated with a certain ideal of national cinema production. As one of Loach's most consistent defenders and a leading theorist of national cinema, Hill describes the director's continuing importance in the 1990s (a quarter century after his career was effectively launched with *Cathy Come Home* [1965]), in the following terms during a review of Loach's 1998 film *My Name is Joe*:

[I]n the context of contemporary British film-making a Loach film is clearly more than 'just another film.' At a time when the would-be champions of the British film industry are fixated on the need for more 'commercial' films, it is clearly important that the kind of socially questioning cinema *My Name is Joe* represents is seen and supported. (1998, p. 21)

This passage is a very significant one for my analysis of *Ae Fond Kiss* and I will thus refer back to it on several occasions. For now I would like to focus on what Hill describes as Loach's 'socially questioning cinema' and how this is related to the director's place in the canon of British national cinema broadly, and Scottish national cinema in particular. A cursory glance at the titles of book-length studies of Loach's oeuvre is enough to illustrate how important the politically-engaged content of his films are to the way in which his career is understood: *The Cinema of Ken Loach: Art in the Service of the People* (Leigh, 2002); *Agent of Challenge and Defiance: The*

Films of Ken Loach (McKnight, 1997); and *Which Side Are You On?: Ken Loach and His Films* (Hayward, 2004). All three of these titles unambiguously signal the fact that their respective analyses will be in large part dedicated to the political orientation of his work, concentrating on the capacity of those films to act as social criticism.

Hill hints at a number of important issues when he writes that because of this aspect of Loach's work, his films should be 'seen and supported.' Attracting audiences on a large scale, especially within Britain, has been a consistent problem throughout Loach's career since it was effectively revived by the success of *Hidden Agenda* (1990) (Hayward, 2004, pp. 203-207; Fuller, 1998, p. 178). Despite this lack of success at home, his films have consistently attracted audiences in Europe. His film *The Navigators* (2001), for example, received only a television airing in Britain while it ran in cinemas across the continent. Like heritage cinema, Loach's films are thus known for being more popular abroad, but unlike heritage cinema, this is not seen by critics as a shortcoming in those making the films, but instead as a shortcoming in British audiences. While the place where each kind of film-making is thought to be popular is surely relevant to how export is understood by critics (in this case America vs. Europe), the principle is nonetheless the same. Leaving this aside for the time being, Loach's lack of popularity within Britain is a fact that many critics sympathetic to Loach have bemoaned, leading one to call the underappreciation of the director in his homeland 'scandalous' (Wayne, 2002, p. 46).

Hill is in one sense participating in this plea to the public, but 'supported' can also be taken to have an institutional meaning. As seen in the literature review portion of this thesis, Hill has argued that 'a nationally specific cinema characterised by questioning and inquiry' – the cinema his model prefers, and which Loach's films can be said to exemplify – 'is not the kind of "national cinema" which is encouraged by

the market-place', but it is one that is necessary nonetheless (1992, p. 17). The use of the word 'supported' thus takes on a special resonance in Hill's writing, one that implicitly chides government to continue to make such cinema possible. This is thus a clear instance where Higson's critique of Hill's writing on the broader topic of national cinema – 'Hill is not simply engaging in an academic theoretical debate but is in part mounting an argument about policy' (2000, p. 39) – is especially insightful.

Intertwined with the political concerns that mark his films has been Loach's preferred aesthetic strategies, specifically his commitment to social realism of the type that was popularized when he began his career in the mid-1960s. As Hill indicates, Loach is commonly described as adhering to this practice long after it had fallen out of favour with many other British film-makers. He then valorizes this stylistic adherence along with the political one already discussed: 'it is precisely because Loach's political and *cinematic concerns* have remained consistent that he is now in danger of being written off as old-fashioned and out of step with both the prevailing zeitgeist and the wannabe British film-making renaissance' (1998, p. 18; emphasis added). Loach's commitment to such politics and aesthetics has helped to cement his position in the British national cinematic canon. As Higson (1986) has pointed out, the tradition of social realism has attained a hegemonic status in discussions of British cinema and has become a paradigm that is critically endorsed by many scholars as well as film-makers as showing the 'British way of life' and distinguishing the national product from that of other cinemas, particularly that of Hollywood. Moreover, critics such as Peter Wollen (1993) have identified this strand of British cinema as acting as the equivalent of an art cinema tradition for a national film culture which for a great deal of its history had not embraced the aesthetics of political modernist film practice (see also Hill, 2000b, p. 18). Given that such a place within

British cinema historiography is allotted to social realism, it is possible to relate Loach's work to that of politically and aesthetically like-minded film-makers such as John Grierson or Karel Reisz and to establish a long-running tradition of British realism which, despite the substantial difference between the various artists, can be seen as roughly continuous since the 1930s and continuing on to more contemporary film-makers such as Lynne Ramsay and Gary Oldman (Hill 2000a).

Loach's aesthetic commitment to realism also enhances his 'national' credentials because of the sort of representational 'authenticity' that a social realist style has allowed the director to create in his films. Many of the director's most widely known practices are aimed at presenting 'real' people and places, and his critical reputation within film studies at large still rests on this aspect of his work.³⁷ These practices include location shooting and the casting of actors from the milieu he is portraying, practices which are continued in *Ae Fond Kiss*. By attempting to show various parts of the nation with some degree of 'authenticity', Loach's cinema helps to diversify the representations of the 'British way of life' visible on television and cinema screens and thus implicitly interrogates the image of the nation as it has become known in mainstream film and television. Within the context of Scottish cinema, where national representation has been at the top of the critical agenda, this aspect of Loach's work takes upon a very distinct resonance. Petrie (who is not only a Scottish cinema historian but was also on the Lottery Panel that approved the production funds allotted to *Ae Fond Kiss*) has cited *My Name is Joe* as being amongst a group of films of the 'new Scottish cinema' that were performing the long overdue task of representing the contemporary Scottish city, which implicitly comes as a response to decades of mainly rural visions of the nation (2000, p. 199). As we will see, *Ae Fond Kiss* takes this notion of authentic representation a bit further by

attempting to depict the realities of Glasgow's changing ethnic, racial and religious landscape; an attempt which played a major part in the project receiving the endorsement of Scottish Screen.

1.2: Politics and/versus Genre in Loach's Oeuvre

Although Loach's films deploy a visual style and mise-en-scène that correspond with the conventions of social realism, as Jacob Leigh (2002), Hill and others have pointed out, the narratives of his films are very much indebted to the conventions of melodrama. Hill, who described *My Name is Joe* as a 'social realist male weepie' (1998, p. 21), describes the co-existence of these seemingly contradictory modes of representation in a particularly concise manner:

[M]uch of the power to unsettle in Loach's work derives from the apparent impassivity of his cinematic style in relation to the disturbing events in front of the camera. But though his films are shot from a distanced observational standpoint, many of them rely on the dramatic machinery of melodrama: impossible choices, misjudgements, coincidences, a foreshortened sense of cause and effect. (1998, p. 20)

Leigh, who has taken issue with what he sees as Hill's pejorative description of the use of melodrama in Loach's work, more precisely describes Loach's brand of melodrama as being that of the 'melodrama of protest' which 'attempts [...] to rouse the audience to activate a sense of outrage at the injustices or atrocities of the authorities against an innocent protagonist' (2002, p. 22). Leigh's gloss on the function of melodrama is part of his vindication of melodrama as a practice that is suitable for Loach's political purposes, and not one that undermines the messages of his films, a claim that is implicit in Hill's piece (to which *Sight and Sound* added the

opening line, in large print, ‘Why does Britain’s most political film-maker rely on the themes and devices of melodrama?’ [1998, p. 18]). I will go into the melodramatic and generic aspects of *Ae Fond Kiss* in more detail later in this essay, but for now I am interested in showing that the very usage of generic conventions, especially those relating to melodrama, can be perceived as weakening political messages and thereby threatening to undermine the aspect of Loach’s work that has helped to maintain his place in the British canon.

Melodramatic tendencies, as Leigh argues above, allow for a degree of accessibility to the political messages Loach hopes to convey to his audience. Differentiating Loach’s films according to their balance of politics and generic form, Leigh describes the quality of the director’s films as residing in their ability to keep their political messages from disrupting the narrative flow of each film and turning them into overt didacticism (2002, p. 22). This will become important to my analysis of *Ae Fond Kiss* as a strong affinity can be seen between being ‘accessible’ and being ‘commercial.’ Being ‘more commercial’ is something that Hill, in the passage cited at the beginning of this section, derisively describes as typifying the British cinema zeitgeist of the late 1990s, which he describes Loach as acting in opposition to. Such a zeitgeist is also reflected in British film policy during this period. As noted in the literature review portion of this thesis, this period has been widely perceived to be one in which has seen greater emphasis in policy circles placed on being ‘commercial’. It is with this policy shift and its possible ramifications for Loach’s work, which has almost always depended on some form of public support, in mind that we move to an examination of Scottish Screen’s participation in the making of *Ae Fond Kiss*.

1.3: Funding *Ae Fond Kiss*

Scottish Screen provided £500,000 for the making of *Ae Fond Kiss*; this amounted to about 16% of the overall budget for the film and, according to the applicants, was a provision necessary for attaining the remainder of the funds for the film's budget (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 4).³⁸ In this portion of the chapter I will examine the application that Sixteen Films Ltd. submitted to secure these funds, as well as the decision minutes that accompanied the Lottery Panel's decision to award funding to the project. In doing so, I will attempt to look critically at the document as a specimen of cultural policy discourse, to establish the main rhetorical forces that justified the provision of these funds and to discern what goals or aims guided these forces. With this analysis, I hope to establish a framework to guide and inform my analysis of the film which will follow the issues set out in the application and by doing so, try to assess the relationship between the goals expressed in the application and the decision minutes and the film that was produced.

Lottery funded films, especially in Scotland, have had a notoriously difficult time getting distribution and exhibition. More than one policy veteran has spoken of the fear that a project will never get shown in cinemas, or even completed, as being high on the minds of funding bodies (Shannon, 2005; Petrie, 2005b). It is perhaps no surprise then that in terms of quantitative data, the Scottish Screen application form is predominantly concerned with questions of viability in terms of completion and distribution. The first twenty-three items on the application form for *Ae Fond Kiss* relate to these issues, and it is in these questions that we can see the applicants beginning to use their status as established film-makers to their advantage. In the responses to these questions, the applicants refer repeatedly to their track record of completed productions as well as their established relationships with distributors.

Question number eighteen. for example, ‘What is your strategy for raising funds for your film?’, is answered by reference to previous successful funding efforts for *My Name is Joe* and *Sweet Sixteen* as well as reference to ‘long standing relationships’ with funding partners and proven viable distribution territories (Germany and Spain) for the films of Ken Loach (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 4).

Of course Scottish Screen would be familiar with the previous Scottish work of Loach and his team; after all, they helped to make those previous films, having provided funding for *My Name is Joe* and *Sweet Sixteen*. The Lottery Panel was cognizant of this continued support appearing to be problematic. In their decision minutes they wrote, ‘It was noted that Scottish Screen could be criticized for backing the same team, as this would be the third film the Lottery had invested in’ (Scottish Screen, 2003). The concern about a potential controversy, according to the decision minutes, be counterbalanced by financial means: ‘However, it was agreed that this could be turned around in our favour to try and secure a favourable recoupment position with this project’ (Scottish Screen, 2003). We thus can see that the kind of tactical rhetoric which one would think more appropriate to a private studio pervades the discourse of a not-for-profit public body like Scottish Screen. Irrespective of the issues that such language raises for the state of cultural policy during the ‘creative industries’ zeitgeist, the core issue which I would like to continue with pertains to why the Panel, assuming that the privileged recoupment position is not the sole reason, supported this particular team of experienced, relatively high profile artists who arguably did not need the protection from the market that subsidy would theoretically provide.

1.4: Importing National Cinema: The ‘NICL’ and Loach in Scotland

In Scotland, we're a colony in more ways than one...For me the two most important directors in Scotland in the past 15 years have both been English, Danny Boyle and Ken Loach. They were the ones who let us out of the cage. – Peter Mullan (quoted in Murray, 2005a, p. 4)

To answer this question I would suggest the use of a theoretical construct that is typically used for much different ends, that being the economic phenomenon which Toby Miller and his colleagues have termed NICL: the New International Division of Cultural Labour. In various publications, including *Global Hollywood* (2001), *Cultural Policy* (2002), and *Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader* (2003), Miller and a number of collaborators have deployed this term to describe the movement of labour and capital in the media industries under the influence of economic neo-liberal globalization. The most typical illustration of the NICL as Miller and his colleagues describe it is the 'run-away production', in which one country acts as host to a foreign-funded, usually Hollywood, production. The film's foreign-based producers save on costs and the host country receives a boost to the local economy where the production is based. Another form that this international movement can take is that of personnel moving between national film industries, exemplified by the longstanding practice of Hollywood importing talent from other national cinemas, including actors (e.g. Marlene Dietrich or Antonio Banderas), directors (e.g. Fritz Lang or Alejandro Amenábar) or other creative personnel.

The NICL is described in mainly negative terms by Miller and his colleagues as a phenomenon in which Hollywood, which they describe as the centre of the media world, exploits and impoverishes the media economies of other nations, which are in turn described as the periphery (2001, pp. 17-43). But Hollywood and other economic centres are not the only places importing talent, it is also something that has taken place repeatedly since the advent of devolved funding structures in Scotland. Film-

makers such as Lars von Trier, Danny Boyle and John Madden have all made films in Scotland with varying degrees of public support, and have made films which have come to be seen as constituting important works of Scottish national cinema. In a presentation given at the New Scottish Cinema conference in Galway, Ireland, Petrie (2005c) also cited *Rob Roy*, *The Jacket* (John Maybury, 2005), *The Magdalene Sisters* and Scandinavian co-productions such as *Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself* (Lone Sherfig, 2002) as manifestations of this phenomenon. This list can also be expanded to include Ken Loach's Scottish films, though the nature of the relationship between nation, artist and national cinema is more complex here than it is in the case of 'run-away productions' such as *The Jacket* and *The Magdalene Sisters*.

The high international profile of Ken Loach and the socially activist/realist associations that his authorial persona brings with it were apparently very much on the mind of Scottish Screen when supporting both *Sweet Sixteen* and *Ae Fond Kiss*³⁹ and in the case of the latter film it played a significant part in overcoming the reservations the Lottery Panel had about supporting the project. Language from the decision minutes such as 'The Committee acknowledged that this team was consistently strong and had an increasing European appeal' (Scottish Screen, 2003) suggest this and comments from one panel member reinforced this suggestion. Petrie, who as previously mentioned was on the Panel that approved the application for *Ae Fond Kiss*, has said that, despite the misgivings about repeatedly funding an established artist such as Loach, on balance it was more important that the project be supported because, as he puts it, 'the Scottish film industry needs high profile people like Loach as much as they need the Scottish film industry (possibly more!)' (2005b). Ironically, then, for a small country such as Scotland, it is not always the case that

film-makers desperately need the assistance of funding bodies as much as the funding bodies need the film-makers.

1.5: Loach ‘the Brand’ and the Funding of *Ae Fond Kiss*

This seems to have been something the applicants themselves were aware of as Loach’s ‘high profile’ surfaces at several junctures in the application form. An example of this would be a response to questions pertaining to artistic quality: ‘Our projects have a proven artistic quality. The two films of our West Scotland trilogy both won prizes at the Cannes film festival and went on to reap many awards and accolades around the world’ (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 9). In addition to references to Loach’s international critical reputation, the applicants also refer to the style that has won him that reputation. Realism, and the supposedly attendant authenticity of Loach’s representations – in short, his authorial brand – is brought up in a response to the project’s potential Scottish cultural relevance: ‘this is the third of a trilogy of Scottish films that we wish to be seen as a *triptych of true life in Scotland at the turn of the millennium*’ (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 7; emphasis added).

Describing *Ae Fond Kiss* as a part of a West Scotland trilogy is a particularly interesting manner of rhetorically reinforcing the authorial brand on the project, not the least because the mentions of such a trilogy are difficult to find before the making of the film. The idea of the three films forming a thematic trilogy was also mentioned briefly in the application to Scottish Screen for production funds for *Sweet Sixteen* (Scottish Screen, 2001, p. 9) but it was mainly articulated during the production and promotion of *Ae Fond Kiss*. The term ‘trilogy’ is used somewhat loosely in the promotional discourses surrounding the film and Loach himself has admitted, in an

interview at the Edinburgh Film Festival contained on the DVD release of *Ae Fond Kiss*, that the appellation ‘West Scotland Trilogy’ may have been a creation meant to impress funding bodies.⁴⁰ In any case, as Thomas Elsaesser points out, the simple invocation of a trilogy of films helps to underscore the primacy of the authors of the larger body of work (2005, p. 52), and thus in this case help to reiterate the association of the Loach brand with the project. Through answers that do things like referring to larger bodies of authorial output, mentioning awards and branded styles, and so forth, we see the applicants laying out their side of the bargain: supporting a Loach film, they hint strongly, means garnering international acclaim, acclaim that will likely couched in language praising the depiction of ‘true life’ in contemporary Scotland.

But if Scottish Screen hoped to import these desirable aspects of Loach’s film-making, they were also aware of some of the drawbacks attendant to his brand of cinema. By this I mean the reputed failure of his films to find local audiences. The worry that *Ae Fond Kiss* will be another Loach film that no one in Scotland or the UK at large goes to see can be detected in the first sentence of their approval of the project: ‘On the whole the Committee were supportive of this project and agreed *it was possibly more commercial* and less grim than previous Ken Loach projects’ (emphasis added). It is important to note that the Panel speaks of the project’s commercial potential before any mention is made of the socio-political content of the film, which comes in the next sentence: ‘It was noted that the script was very topical and covered interesting territory with the introduction of an ethnic theme’. Here, it is as if the Panel recognizes that the lack of British audiences will be the first objection to their support for another Loach film. The film-makers also realize this perceived problem and seek to address it both directly and indirectly in their responses to

questions throughout the application form. When responding to questions as to the nature of the film's planned distribution strategy, the applicants tellingly comment on the likely (local) commercial viability of the project vis-à-vis their previous work:

·We would very much hope to get the same sort of release (*or better as this time it's a love story!*) as we had for *Sweet Sixteen*. [...] *This is almost like a mainstream release*. Through *Sweet Sixteen* and *My Name is Joe* before it, we have begun *to build a strong Scottish audience for our work* and hopefully through the terrific Scottish support have introduced *a wider audience* to the difficult issues we explored in these two films. (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 9; emphases added)

The hope expressed here that the deployment of genre, the love story narrative, could possibly lead to a 'wider audience' has very significant implications for the way in which we can view *Ae Fond Kiss* and its potential to be both politically important and palatable to wider audiences, and I will be returning to such deployment when analysing the film. But for now it is important to register the prominence of audience appeal and commercial potential in the discourse of what is implicitly described in Scottish cinema history as a culturally-oriented organization. The applicants make sure to mention these commercial aspects of the project as much as possible and the decision minutes show them to be the foremost things in the Panel's statements.

Audiences, or the lack thereof, may have been anticipated to be a major reason for possibly turning down the application, but, in keeping with the importance of authorial branding throughout the application process for the film, approving it was also justified with reference to its potential to address social problems; in short its promise as a piece of socially engaged art that will address issues relating to multicultural Scotland: 'It was noted that the script was very topical and covered interesting territory with the introduction of an ethnic theme' (Scottish Screen, 2003). Again the applicants themselves seem to have been aware that this was one of the

strengths of their proposal. To the questions on the application which specifically relate to the project's potential 'Public Benefit' the applicants give two answers that reference multiculturalism. The first of these is a reference to the audience of the film as it relates to its content. Asked, 'How many people will benefit from the project and in what ways will they benefit?', the applicants respond by citing the economic impact the project will have, including local employment and spending, but then go on to mention a different sort of public benefit: 'we would hope that the specific communities that the film deals with will benefit by seeing issues important to them played out and explored on the big screen' (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 7). Thus, 'public benefit' is seen as addressing an audience with similar concerns to the characters in the film and helping them to come to terms with a social problem, presumably ethnic and religious difference.

That this is the intended message of the film, at least at this point in its development, is reiterated by the next question and response. Replying to a query about equal opportunities policy for the production company, the applicants respond with reference to the content of the film: 'The film deals overtly with cultural and religious differences within the community and the concomitant issues that arise. The message of the film is one of tolerance within our multicultural society. We would hope to reflect this within the way in which we make the film' (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 7). What makes this response interesting is how indirect it is given the question itself. One would expect an applicant to respond to this question by discussing their human resources policies, not by discussing the themes of the film being produced. The applicants are clearly taking this question as an opportunity to insist on the socially relevant thrust of the film. The next question deals more directly with this aspect of the film by asking 'How is your project culturally relevant to Scotland?'.

The applicants' respond: 'The film is set in Scotland and deals with issues and problems that are very relevant not only to Scotland, but also to the rest of the UK and other European countries' (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 7). Social function, cultural relevance, local address and potential for exportability are thus conflated in a single sentence.

That these multiple goals could be perceived as conflicting can be seen by returning to the applicants' response to the distribution question. After hinting at the possibility of mainstream release in the passage previously cited, the applicants are quick to assign the blame for their past failures in reaching wider audiences on the politically engaged content of their films: 'The films we make are still perceived as "art-house" productions and, as such, it is difficult for us to break in to the mainstream, especially as we concentrate on tough subjects' (Scottish Screen, 2003, p. 9). (As we will see later in the chapter, this response was particularly prescient, though in unexpected ways, of the distribution difficulties the film would face.) The question that this all begs, then, is how all of this apparent conflict between communicating a political message whilst also being accessible plays out in tangible terms. Did the film end up 'selling out', being so commercial in a bid to win audiences that it failed to make a substantial 'Loachian' impact? Or was it so intent on its message that audiences will be driven away by dread of didacticism? It is with these questions in mind that I now turn to an analysis of *Ae Fond Kiss*, beginning with a contextualization of the film within the history of representing the problems of multiculturalism in contemporary western cinema.

1.6: Contextualizing *Ae Fond Kiss*: The Cinema of Multiculturalism

Until the release of *Me Fond Kiss*, there were not many films dealing with the immigrant experience in Scottish cinema. A few films, such as Bill Forsyth's *Comfort and Joy* (1984) and the low-budget comedy *American Cousins* (Don Coutts, 2003), dealt with the experiences of Italian immigrants to Scotland and their descendants, but since *The Gorbals Story* (David MacKane, 1950) no film had attempted to deal directly with the experience of Scottish-Asians. (At least none produced within the context of the British/Scottish film industry.) In comparison, representations of British-Asian life are well established fixtures of the British cinema canon. Two of the most high-profile British films of the 1980s were *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (Stephen Frears, 1987) both of which were critically acclaimed and box office successes. In his study of British cinema in the 1980s, Hill points to these two films as important works from the decade as they 'challenge traditional conceptions of "race" and celebrate the emergence of new kinds of hybrid identities' during one of the otherwise most politically conservative epochs in post-war British history (1999, p. xiii). The success of the films on all fronts proved to be very influential. As Christine Geraghty argues in her book on *My Beautiful Laundrette*, these films helped to create a market niche for films about the British-Asian experience and as such paved the way for the later box-office successes *East is East* and *Bend it Like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002) (2005, p. 78).

Taken together, films like *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *East is East* and *Bend it Like Beckham*, as well as less high profile films such as *Wild West* (David Attwood, 1992), *Bhaji on the Beach* (Gurinder Chadha, 1993), and *Anita and Me* (Metin Hüseyin, 2002) constitute institutional, industrial and ideological models which *Me Fond Kiss* can be seen as reacting to in a variety of ways. Casting the net more widely, we could also point to other prominent European and American films about

the multicultural condition, such a list would include Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) and *Jungle Fever* (1992), the German-Turkish/Turkish-German films of Fatih Akin, or French films such as *La Haine* (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995), *L'Afrance* (Alain Gomis, 2001) or *À la place du coeur* (Robert Guédiguian, 1998), to name just a few. As we have seen in the funding application and the examination of Loach's authorial persona, a discourse of social relevance – a promise of authentically representing life in contemporary Scotland – helps to justify the funding of *Ae Fond Kiss*, a discourse which brings to mind the cultural value assigned by Hill and others to the Kureishi-Frears films. The impulse to be 'more commercial' is also present in funding discourses and the most high-profile examples of films that have successfully attempted to be popular while also reflecting on 'serious' issues pertaining to multiculturalism were *East is East* and *Bend It Like Beckham*. For this reason, as well as some others, these films are especially important as intertexts for Loach's film. In what follows I will offer an overview of *Ae Fond Kiss*, seeking to assess how the film balances the demands of being popular while also being serious social commentary. This assessment will also draw on critical debates which circulate about the work of Ken Loach and the balance of genre and political commentary therein. I will conclude this part of the essay by considering the necessity and novelty of *Ae Fond Kiss* vis-à-vis these other existing portraits of multicultural Britain and looking at the reception of the film in terms of all of these contexts.

1.7: Hybridity and Consensus in *Ae Fond Kiss*

Discussing differences between contemporary British-Asian films and those of the 1980s, Geraghty notes that whilst the earlier films felt the need to establish a

separate space for British-Asian identity, one distinct from being *either* British or Asian, the later films 'take such diversity for granted' with 'the mainsprings of the plots lying elsewhere' (2005, p. 78). Is this true of *Ae Fond Kiss*? The opening scenes of the film seem to imply a certain acceptance of diversity and a condition of multi-ethnic consensus. The film begins in a crowded nightclub in which we see a number of persons of different ethnicities uninhibitedly dancing together to bhangra music, which is itself a hybrid form of club music drawing on South Asian and British musical forms, and which is featured in Gurinder Chadha's acclaimed short film *I'm British But...* (1990) as a symbol of the synthesis of British and Asian cultures. As Karen Ross, Sarita Malik and others have argued, music is one of the most prominent sites of the mixing of immigrant cultures and often plays an important role in representations of multiculturalism (Ross, 1996, p. xiv; Malik, 1996, p. 211). Besides the aforementioned prominence of bhangra in Chadha's film, music also plays notable thematic parts in: *Wild West*, where a group of British-Pakistani youths form a country and western band, with comedy deriving from this cultural juxtaposition; *Anita and Me*, in which Anita's Punjabi-born father performs a medley of Punjabi songs only to break into 'Volare' at a neighbour's wedding; and *Bend It Like Beckham*, where Italian opera (Puccini's 'Nessun Dorma') is juxtaposed comically with hallucinatory images of Jess's Indian aunts when she is taking an important free kick late in the film. These are just a selection of moments from British films, but similar instances of multicultural usage of music can be found in *Head On* (Fatih Akin, 2003), the films of Spike Lee and French beur films such as *La Haine*. Writing in 1996 regarding changes in representations of 'black' people in Britain, Malik described the increasing turn towards celebrations of hybridity as shift in focus 'from the political arena to the cultural arena, where "the politics of race" are interwoven

with the “politics of the dancefloor”, the former inextricably linked to the latter’ (1996, p. 211). Without wanting to suggest that Loach and Lavery are referencing Malik’s description specifically, the opening of *Ae Fond Kiss* is almost too perfect a reference to the trend that she identifies.

The film’s images of multicultural harmony in the club are grafted onto the Scottish city through the opening montage sequence. The sequence inside the club is followed by a landscape shot of an urban space which, with its terraced architecture, is identifiably British. The film’s title, taken from a Burns lyric, is printed on the screen above the cityscape, making it clear that this is a Scottish space. The juxtaposition of these shots implies that the Scottish city is home to the hip, celebratory cultural diversity seen in the nightclub. Further intercutting shows a South Asian shopkeeper, who will later be revealed to be Tariq (Ahmad Riaz), the father of Casim, who is the DJ seen in the club and the film’s protagonist, as he comically attempts to keep dogs from urinating on his newspaper placard. The tone of comedy in this sequence further aligns the film with trends in British multicultural cinema, and much European multicultural cinema.⁴¹ More specifically, this montage sequence recalls the humorous content and tone of *East is East*. The contrast between Casim and his father evokes both the gap between the two generations as well as the comic absurdity of the elder man, bringing to mind Om Puri’s character in O’Donnell’s film as well as the generation gap in that film which is, initially at least, presented with a similar degree of humour. Also like *East is East*, *Ae Fond Kiss* will in large part be concerned with peeling back this seemingly comic surface layer and exposing an insurmountable divide between the generations of British-Asians, but unlike *East is East*, the film will locate that divide in the present instead of the early 1970s.

As the opening credits conclude and the film's narrative begins, we come to a student assembly of some sort in a Catholic school. The first shot in this sequence continues the theme of apparent integration, as we see a Catholic priest framed in the foreground with two school students of Asian ethnicity in the background, one of whom is wearing a traditional Sikh headscarf, a piece of clothing which accentuates her religious difference from the priest. On the soundtrack we hear Tahara (Shabana Bakhsh), who was earlier established as the daughter of the shopkeeper in the opening montage, giving a debate club talk arguing against western essentializing of Islamic identity. This speech and the reaction it elicits from the students are very significant to the overall film and the scene is therefore worth looking at in some detail.

In the authorial context, this is one of the Loachian moments which Leigh, drawing on Judith Williamson, terms the 'keynote speech' in which a character explicitly states the point of view that Loach and his screenwriter are trying to make with the film (2002, p. 13). The context of these moments, according to Leigh, vary from film to film and can occasionally be so nakedly didactic as to alienate the audience from being absorbed into the film; this then demands that Loach and his screenwriters find ways to seamlessly integrate the speech into the story so that it is not off-putting to the audience (2002, p. 22). It seems quite clever on the part of screenwriter Paul Laverty to begin the film with a debate that conveniently allows for an opportunity to set out the themes of the film, but as we will see in the reception portion of this analysis, it didn't fool anyone as many reviewers thought this 'keynote speech' (a fitting term given both its diegetic and ideological context in the film) to be a heavy-handed authorial intrusion. But the speech does more than introduce the themes of the film, it also introduces us to Tahara, who seems very reminiscent of another figure from contemporary British-Asian films.

With her references to football (former Celtic player Henrik Larsson is mentioned before the Rangers top is revealed) and generally spirited attitude here and throughout the film, Tahara echoes the character of Jess (Parminder Nagra), the rebellious football-obsessed British-Asian teenager from *Bend It Like Beckham*. Her fellow students are certainly more interested in her stance on football than it is in the issue of Islamic identity. It is her support of Rangers, with its attendant sectarian reference,⁴² not anti-Islamist sentiment, that angers Tahara's male classmates and sets the plot in motion. The faces of the other students, both white and Asian, watching Tahara's speech are consistently bored and listless throughout the discussion of British-Asian identity and terrorism; they also remain quiet even when she appears to be undressing on the stage, something that seems implausible in a room full of young adolescents. But as soon as the Rangers top is revealed a murmur goes through the crowd and mixed booing and clapping begins amongst the students. We see students clapping, mainly the girls in the crowd who seem to be most affected by Tahara's defiant yell of 'Bring it on'. Boys in the crowd begin heckling Tahara, but the shouts of derision stem from their support of Celtic and not racism or xenophobia. A confrontation ensues between Tahara and the other students after school. This being a Loach film, we would expect something of an ugly racist incident to occur, but this is not exactly what the film gives us. There are racial taunts, some of which are combined with sectarian insults ('Paki-Hun' one student yells), but the tone of the scene is not as dark and disturbing as it perhaps could have been. Throughout the incident, Tahara is anything but a helpless victim as she first rebukes the boys, telling them to 'grow up,' and subsequently kicks and chases the would-be tormentors. Finally, there is additional tomboy comedy in the final inversion during which the

boys run in fear of Tahara. This is not to say there isn't a dark undertone to the taunts of the boys, but there is still a feeling that this could have been worse.⁴³

Surprisingly given how much Tahara has been developed by this point, we have been misled somewhat with this introduction if we think that she will be the film's main character. The whole sequence was actually an elaborate way of introducing themes and setting the stage for the meeting between Casim and Roisin. Their romance will from here on out become the centre of the film as well as the primary narrative vehicle for forwarding the film's socially critical agenda. Love stories of some sort or another, especially interracial ones, have figured prominently in nearly every film about the British-Asian experience, and are also amongst the plot devices featured in many European and American multicultural films.⁴⁴ The pressures on the couple in any given film can be said to be representative of the larger socio-cultural problems that the film-makers are hoping to critique. The major pressures on Roisin and Casim in *Ae Fond Kiss* are familiar from other films: Casim's arranged marriage (a plot device that Geraghty describes as a cliché in British-Asian films when used with female British-Asian characters [2005, p. 67]) brings to the fore his conflict with the traditions of his parents. Roisin's problem resides with her parish priest whose bigotry will lead him to abuse his power and deprive Roisin of her job. Finally, the two must face up to their inability to understand or sympathize with one another in the face of their respective pressures.

1.8: Visions of Multicultural Scotland: A Return to 'the Cinema of Duty'?

Of these conflicts, the final one turns out the best for Roisin and Casim. The couple ultimately survives the strain and Roisin and Casim continue loving each

other. The underlying cultural conflicts, however, are not resolved so optimistically. Despite early scenes showing the elder Khan seemingly happily integrated with Scottish society, such as one in which he banters with the white working-class builders who he has hired to build the extension to his house, the film comes to insist on the fundamental non-assimilation of the older generation of Scottish-Asians. This is another aspect of the film which initially at least recalls *Bend It Beckham*, in which, as Paul Dave points out, Jess's father carries 'the burden of racial misery as a memory' (2005, p. 16) and because of such memories is reluctant to let his daughters fully integrate into British society. Also like *Bend It*, the film shows very little racial abuse taking place. Apart from the chasing of Tahara described above, racism in the film takes place indirectly as characters of the same ethnicity discuss those of the other, e.g. when Hammid (Shy Ramsan) tells Casim that Rosin is just some 'goree', or the Priest (Gerard Kelly) admonishes Roisin for thinking she can sleep with 'any Tom, Dick or Mohammed' and still be approved to teach in Catholic schools. To this end, a number of scenes depicting explicit racial abuse of the couple and the parents have been deleted from the finished film.⁴⁵ Racism in *À la Fond Kiss* thus becomes a social force that lurks behind the veneer of polite society but which is nonetheless pervasive.

Though we don't see it, again and again we are reminded that Casim's parents have suffered racism and discrimination and in part because of this will never accept Roisin as his partner. Neither will Catholicism ever tolerate their relationship. The representatives of both sets of values act in increasingly appalling ways, including the memorably malevolent parish priest's tirade at Roisin which concludes with his advice to 'go teach the Protestants'. In terms of heavy-handed presentation, this is matched only by the Khan family's equally mean-spirited charade in which they

attempt to make Roisin think that Casim will be going through with the marriage that they have arranged for him in an attempt to split the couple up. By the end we are left with a sense of the hopelessness of trying to change the minds and attitudes of most of the older generations.

This is one aspect that distinguishes the film from its contemporaries: though it begins with humour and high spirits, its narrative arc is one that reverses that of a film like *Bend It Like Beckham*. This is encapsulated by the ways in which the two films parallel the Irish experience in Britain with that of Asian immigrants. In Chadha's film the two groups can each relate to the other's experience of discrimination and ethnic prejudice. This is encapsulated in one particularly saccharin moment after Jess has been called a 'Paki' during a football match and was sent off for lashing out at the girl who used the slur. She complains to her coach and love interest (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers) that he doesn't understand what it feels like to be racially abused in such a manner and he responds, 'Of course I do, I'm Irish'; the two then hug and the film goes on. Loach and Laverty's treatment, on the other hand, has the two groups seeming to peacefully coexist only to reveal them to be as intolerant of one another as the host culture is. Writing about the narrative arc of the romance genre, Geraghty writes that in such stories, 'while there are problems on the way, the narrative drives to the resolution in which the integration of the couple into society provides a happy ending' (2005, p. 42). Though Casim and Roisin do stay together, their arc is actually one of dis-integration from their respective societies, a pattern that distinguishes the film from many of similar films.

This can be seen by comparing the ways in which the Asian fathers are depicted at the ends of *Bend It* and *Ac Fond Kiss*. The final image of *Bend It* has the coach playing cricket with Jess's father, a scene that Dave describes as resembling the

village green, which in iconic terms is 'a nostalgic benchmark of Englishness' (2005, p. 16). In contrast one of the final images of the Khan patriarch in *Ae Fond Kiss* shows him destroying the extension he built for Casim in a fit of despairing rage. The film's concluding reconciliation between Casim and Roisin is upbeat in tone, but remains somewhat unresolved and ambivalent. The happiness of the ending is a private one, set within the lovers' flat. Public space, however, remains hostile to the couple, as seen by the lack of resolution of the motif in which Casim continually asks Roisin to duck her head down so that his cousins don't see them together. In a more optimistic film, this motif would be concluded with Roisin bravely holding her head up no matter where the couple were. Thus, while unlike many of Loach's films, there is some hope expressed by virtue of Casim and Roisin's relationship surviving the stresses of these conflicts, their love still comes with the likely consequence that Casim will never speak to his parents again and Roisin will be alienated from the traditional institutions of her culture and will indeed have to teach the Protestants. The Khan family will also suffer greatly. The last time we see him, Tariq cannot bear to make eye contact with Tahara when she tells her parents that she plans to attend Edinburgh University against their wishes, a scene which offers little hope for the future of the family. This is on top of the high probability that, as Blandford points out, the wedding of Casim's older sister will have to be called off due to his relationship with Roisin (2007, p.77). Calling the ending of *Ae Fond Kiss* a happy one would thus be a bit of an overstatement and the Lottery Panel's description of it as 'less grim than other Ken Loach films' is more fitting.

In keeping with Hill's description of his oeuvre generally, with *Ae Fond Kiss*, Loach unfashionably insists on a bleaker view of multiculturalism, even if he utilizes the conventions of more mainstream commercial cinema in order to do so. By doing

this. *Ae Fond Kiss* represents a return to what Malik, using the work of Cameron Bailey to discuss changes in black-themed British films, describes as the ‘cinema of duty’. Such films, according to Bailey and Malik were ‘social issue in content, documentary realist in style, firmly *responsible* in intention’ and present the tradition which subsequent British films beginning with *My Beautiful Laundrette* sought to break from (1996, pp. 203-204). Rather than simply providing another instance of Loach being an old-fashioned, out of date film-maker in this regard, we can look at films contemporary to *Ae Fond Kiss*, such as *A Way of Life* (Amma Asante, 2004) and *Yasmin* (Kenny Glenaan, 2004) which also, and with more intense pessimism, insist that British-Asians are not accepted or assimilated into mainstream British culture. In light of these films, we could perhaps see *Ae Fond Kiss* as presaging a new trend towards grim views of multicultural British society.

1.9: The Perils of Crossing-Over: The Promotion, Reception and Distribution of *Ae Fond Kiss*

Since I sought to establish a key question for the film in the context of its support by Scottish Screen as one of balance between accessibility and politics, commerce and culture, the question now is whether or not the film was perceived to have done so with any degree of success. In this portion of the chapter I will look more closely at the terms on which the film circulated in British and European film cultures. (Unlike most of the films examined in this thesis, *Ae Fond Kiss* had very little success in reaching North American audiences.⁴⁶) I will begin this part of the chapter by looking more closely at the terms in which the film was promoted, focusing here on the trailers produced for the film in the UK and in France.⁴⁷

In keeping with what I have described above as the film's intertextual referencing of *Bend It Like Beckham* and other more upbeat British-Asian films, the film's UK trailer features bhangra music, images taken from the nightclub sequence, Tariq comically stumbling through the garden, and most tellingly, Tahara's 'keynote speech' which culminates in her undressing to reveal her football top. All of these images appear together in a montage preceding an overview of the film's plot, which forms the main body of the trailer and which ends with Casim's father destroying the extension. Such an arrangement of images presents a concise overview of the film as a whole, replicating its arc from Tahara's mild act of rebellion, through the moments of comedy that recall similar moments in *East is East*, focusing heavily on the romance which is the main audience 'hook', and touching only obliquely on the film's ambivalent conclusion. When it does so, the sense one gets from seeing it in the trailer is that this is not the film's denouement but one of the complications that will be overcome by the couple. By so doing, the trailer presents the film as more or less the same film as these predecessors, packaging it as a film that tackles social issues but which is still entertaining and upbeat. The film's French trailer, on the other hand, forgoes the opening preamble with Tahara and the bhangra and instead begins with the love story, focusing more intensely on the social issues regarding intercultural conflict, an advertising choice not unrelated to the repeated mentions of Ken Loach's authorship of the film, as socio-cultural issues and the Loach brand appear to go together for French audiences. Such mentions are lacking in the UK trailer, where Loach is only mentioned once at the end of the trailer, a decision which perhaps reflects on the negative commercial aspects of the Loach brand in Britain.

The balance between the film's socially critical content and its mainstream appeal are also the main objects of much of the journalistic reception of the film, as is

the relationship between these elements and the persona of the film's director.

Judging by some of the journalistic reviews of the film, the film's relatively upbeat ending was seen as an unexpected aspect of the film. Instead of being seen simply as something that is good about the film, many reviewers responded to the conflict between such an ending and what has come to be expected from Loach. The love story as a whole prompted *The Guardian*'s reviewer Geoffrey McNab to ask, 'Has Ken Loach gone soft?' (2004, p. 10). Another reviewer's headline proclaims 'We Need More Punch from this Glasgow Kiss' (*The Daily Mail*, 2004). The promotional piece for the film in *Sight and Sound* likewise implicitly raises this question with reference to commercial appeal, comparing the film to other popular treatments of British multiculturalism:

Loach hints – as producer Rebecca O'Brien has already suggested to me – that the project is a mite more 'commercial' than some of his previous outings. The recent successes of Anglo-Asian films such as *Bend It Like Beckham* certainly makes the production timely, though Loach is quick to dismiss the notion that he's jumping on the bandwagon. (Mottram, 2004, p. 22)

Conversely, other reviewers felt *Ae Fond Kiss* to be too much of a Loach film, seeing this branding as a negative quality. *The Daily Telegraph*'s review, for example, features the self-explanatory headline: 'Tell us something we don't know. Ken Loach's Glaswegian cross-race love story is passionate and sexy but lacking in subtlety' (Robey, 2004, p. 20) and takes issue specifically with the didacticism of Tahara's speech at the beginning of the film. To round out this brief survey of the film's reception, reactions to the film from the world of British film scholarship have included Hill criticising the lack of class politics and the insistence on optimism in the film (2005). It would seem then that if Loach and Lavery were trying to be more

commercial and accessible, possibly due to changing institutional priorities, they end up displeasing their core supporters whilst also failing to convince their detractors.

In terms of reaching audiences, overall figures for the film were roughly as they were predicted to be in the application, with nearly 1.3 million admissions recorded across Europe (Lumiere Database, 2007). with the significant exception, however, of local viewing of the film. Total admissions within the UK were 102,000 (Lumiere Database, 2007). This number is not broken down by region, but Rebecca O'Brien has said that approximately half of the audiences for Loach's films come from the regions where they are set (O'Brien, 2006). If that were to hold true for *À la Fond Kiss*, this would represent significant market penetration for a nation the size of Scotland, but on the whole, the film's impact within the UK was still dwarfed by its impact abroad. Furthermore, Loach and Laverty's other Scottish films all had greater impacts on the UK box office, with *Sweet Sixteen* drawing 180,000 admissions and *My Name is Joe* drawing 240,000 (Lumiere Database, 2007). The film was, however, more commercially successful overall than other Loach films such as *Sweet Sixteen* (approximately 1,000,000 total admissions) and *The Navigators* (600,000 total admissions) (Lumiere Database, 2007). But the audience figures for *À la Fond Kiss* were affected by the actions of one of the film's UK distributors, Cityscreen, which curtailed its run in some British theatres after audiences complained about the film's love story content. This, according to O'Brien, was thought by the distributors to clash with their arthouse niche, leading to their decision to limit its run in cinemas (2006).⁴⁸ In other words, the very thing that lead the film-makers to hope that the film had mainstream appeal ended up undermining its ability to reach audiences in the UK.

Section 2: *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat*, Hindi Cinema in Britain, and Multicultural Scottish Cinema

Introduction: *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* and a Different Kind of Diversity

If the one of the arguable shortcomings of *Ae Fond Kiss* was its apparent lack of success in reaching British audiences, including audiences who were of Asian descent living in Scotland, the film I will discuss in this second part of the chapter, and the trend which it is part of, have had great success in this regard but present another set of problems for national cinema historiography. It is by now a widely documented fact that Hindi-language films are finding audiences in the UK on a large scale, mainly amongst British-Asians. But there is less said about what this means for the causes of diversity and multiculturalism in British society and British cinema. In this section, I will look at a Hindi-language film set largely in Scotland and concerned with the Scottish-Asian experience and will seek to argue that, rather than representing a solely industrial phenomenon that will benefit the Scottish film industry and Scottish tourism, such film-making can be considered a component of Scottish film culture that is serving the cause of diversity and multiculturalism in ways that films such as *Ae Fond Kiss* are not. In so doing, I will also comment on the extent to which such films, like many other Scottish-based productions, receive support from Scottish film institutions but have been serving the public in ways that were largely unplanned and unanticipated by policy-makers in the past and those currently negotiating further legal agreements meant to encourage more production of the kind.

In their discussion of international co-productions and the policy initiatives that enable them, the authors of *Global Hollywood* argue that policies which favour pan-European film-making are too limited in their reach because they restrict the nations that can be involved in making films. Instead, they argue that 'Multicultural citizenship groups, rather than residency-based point systems, should be considered in determining screen subsidy' (Miller et. al, 2001, p. 108). The project that they cite as pointing in the right direction in this regard is *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* (a film they refer to as *Love, Love, Love*, which is an English translation of the Hindi title). This film – which I will henceforth refer to as *PIAM* – received assistance in the form of logistical management and location scouting from the Glasgow Film Office and Scottish Screen Locations (Reynolds, 2007), and is one of several Hindi-language films to have been shot in large part in Scotland during a fad for films set in Scotland amongst Bollywood producers (*The Independent*, 2000, p. 5). Like other films from this period such as *Shaheed Uddam Singh* (Chitraarth, 2000) and *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Karan Johar, 1998), *PIAM* is also a product of the NICL, though in a very different way than *Ae Fond Kiss*. In some senses, these films are textbook examples of 'run away productions' which have turned to Scotland as a way of bringing some novelty to its final product and by doing so to cash in on a trend in the industry. Scotland, as Martin-Jones shows, benefits via local spend and in increased tourism from cinema-going audiences that see Scottish locales on the big screen (2005b, pp. 49-60). As previously mentioned, the NICL is described mainly in negative terms by the writers of *Global Hollywood*, but this particular manifestation of it is seen by the same group as being something that should be encouraged on the basis of audience address. But can such films be considered to constitute a significant cultural

contribution to Scottish film culture, or are they Indian films that happen to have been made in Scotland?

Before taking up this question, I must make some methodological clarifications. *PIAM* in particular did not have much of a discernible impact on Scottish audiences of South Asian descent or otherwise (or at least not one that can be easily researched; despite the prevalence of Hindi films in British cinema circuits, they are not widely reported on or reviewed in mainstream newspapers), and there is currently little available data regarding Hindi-language films' popularity within Scotland specifically. Partly because of this, my argument will deviate from the other case studies in this thesis and will not be a historically-based argument. In this section of the chapter I will instead be making an argument in principle that the larger trends which *PIAM* is a part of, including Hindi-language cross-over successes in Britain and 'NRI' cinema more generally, can be seen as positive innovations in terms of advancing the agendas of multiculturalism and diversity for the national cinemas affected by their manifestations, including those of Scotland and Britain. Crucially, the analysis will look at the extent to which such films find audiences both amongst British-Asians and Scottish-Asians in addition to its already expansive established market in South Asia and throughout the world, a target market that the films' producers estimated at one billion people (*The Sunday Times*, 2000). I will then conclude the section by reflecting on developments in this sector of the British film industry, looking specifically at ongoing trade talks with India as well as a number of other nations with whom the UK's Department for Culture, Media and Sport are negotiating co-production treaties.

2.1: Bollywood in/and Britain

Anyone who has followed box office trends in Britain over the last decade, or who has frequented multiplexes in many British cities, will be somewhat cognizant of the increasing presence of Hindi-language films within the British film exhibition sector. This presence is such that Hindi films now constitute the largest non-English language section of the British box office (UK Film Council, N.D., p. 9) and some journalists have also suggested that they now collectively outgross British-produced films at the UK box office (Spencer, 2006, p. 41). While this may be an exaggeration, a glance of some of the statistics for relative audiences for the most popular Hindi films can give some idea of the relative degree of their success in Britain. The 1998 film *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* sold more tickets at the UK box office (over 434,000) than a number of high profile films such as *The Boxer* (Jim Sheridan, 1998) (330,000), *Velvet Goldmine* (Todd Haynes, 1998) (114,000) and *My Name is Joe* (238,000) (Lumiere Database, 2007). 2001, which Dina Iordanova describes as a breakthrough year for Hindi-films in British cinemas (2002), saw *Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham* (Karan Johar, 2001), with total UK admissions of 407,000, draw comparable audiences to those for the Ben Stiller comedy *Zoolander* (Ben Stiller, 2001) (470,000) and the Coen brothers' *The Man Who Wasn't There* (Joel Coen, 2001) (380,000) (Lumiere Database, 2007). While Hindi films still only constitute about 1% of the British box office, these numbers are still surprisingly high for foreign language films, and the attendance figures for individual films would be the envy of any number of British film-makers, including Ken Loach. As is the case with many films today, box office statistics represent only a fraction of any given film's total revenue, and the existence of specialty distributors of Hindi DVDs in the UK as well as the presence of

Hindi films in shops and public libraries hint at an even larger impact on British audiences.

The growth in popularity of Hindi-language films within Britain is a direct product of the global diaspora of Britain's former colonies on the sub-continent. As Jigna Desai points out, Britain is not only home to the largest ethnically South Asian population outside of Asia it is also the fastest growing market for Hindi-language films (2004, p. 41). In addition to the 1.3 million persons of Indian descent living in Britain noted by Mishra (2002, p. 235), Iordanova (2002) and Martin-Jones (2005b, p. 51), when combined with persons of Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi ancestry, all of whom are amongst the audiences for Hindi films (Banaji, 2006, p. 52), this figure rises to about 2.3 million people, approximately 5% of the population (UK Film Council, N.D., p. 9). This large diasporic population (which also has, relatively speaking, more disposable income and a stronger currency than Hindi film audiences in India or anywhere else in the world), has made Britain one of the most coveted markets for Indian producers, even more coveted than prime domestic territories (Dwyer, 2006, p. 367).

It is possible to speak of Hindi-language film audiences in Britain as nearly exclusively British-Asian in their make-up; as at least two scholars argue, virtually no non-Asians are to be found amongst such audiences (Dwyer, 2006, p. 364; Banaji, 2006, p. 52), a situation which contrasts interestingly with British-Asian themed films, which, as Desai points out, have traditionally been consumed almost entirely by white audiences within Britain and abroad (2004, p. 65). A sense of cultural community is central to the films' appeal. Though the majority of British-Asians do not speak Hindi as either their first or second language (Punjabi and Gujarati are the most common Asian languages spoken amongst British-Asians), Hindi-language

films nonetheless act as a site of cultural heritage and family entertainment for those who go to see them (Dwyer, 2006, p. 366). Even if some, especially younger, members of the audience treat the films and the worldview they present ironically (Dwyer, 2006, p. 368), they are nonetheless part of their lives and cultural horizons. The films themselves often reflect the fact that they are being consumed by diasporic audiences and when diasporic characters are the subjects of films – which has increasingly become more common – they explicitly evoke the idea of an Indian cultural community which supersedes national borders. This is an ideal encapsulated in the term ‘Hindustani’ which, according to Vijay Mishra, has connotations of ‘transcendental Indianness’ (2002, p. 253; see also Dwyer, 2006, p. 367). Such exclusive consumption, coupled with overt textual address which evokes Indianness despite generations of diasporic migration, begs the question of how to think about these films in national terms: put crudely, are they only Indian films or can they be included in discussions of Scottish and British cinema? In order to more thoroughly consider the implications of this question, I will now look more closely at specific examples of Hindi films about diasporic subjects, focussing on *PLAM*, while drawing on a number of other famous examples of NRI (Non-Resident Indian) films made in Hindi.

2.2: *PLAM* and Scottish-Asian Representation

In discussing *PLAM* I will be making extensive use of Martin-Jones’s account of the industrial trend which *PLAM* is a part of as well as his analysis of the film itself (2005b). As we will see, though Martin-Jones persuasively argues for the necessity of discussing Indian ‘run away productions’ in relation to the Scottish film industry, his

position on the film's cultural address ultimately overlooks the ways in which such film-making can be said to be bringing a greater degree of diversity and multiculturalism to Scottish and British cinema than is being achieved through the production of British/Scottish-Asian films such as *Ae Fond Kiss*. As such, his is a stance that implicitly positions the films as being of only economic, rather than cultural value to Scotland. My position will be that there is more to be gained from Hindi-language films such as *PIAM* than additional tourists and support for the local multiplex. Fundamental to this argument will be where precisely we locate the national in relation to films like *PIAM*, which are of cultural and industrial relevance to more than one nation.

PIAM tells the story of Isha (Kirti Reddy), young Indian medical student who wins a scholarship to study at the University of Glasgow. As she heads to Scotland, where she will stay with her uncle Lord Inder (Dalip Tahil) and his family, a rich businessman named Yash (Sunil Shetty) falls in love with Isha when presenting her with her scholarship and then hires an actor, Gaurav (Arjun Rampal), to court Isha and once she has fallen for him, to break her heart, leaving her vulnerable to Yash's approaches. Also in pursuit of Isha's heart is her cousin Taj (Aaftab Shivdasani) who falls in love with her during her stay in Scotland. Over the course of his false courtship, Gaurav finds that he actually does love Isha and is devastated by having to fulfil his agreement with Yash. After a number of complications and revelations, Gaurav ultimately marries Isha while Taj and Yash both manage to find eligible brides just as the movie ends.

Before looking at the representation of Scotland in the film and the ideas of national identity it seeks to convey, I would like to pause to highlight some elements that the film has in common with Scottish/British-Asian films. The reasoning for this

being that such continuities demonstrate that there are certain universal concerns that can be found amongst films dealing with the diasporic experience, no matter what language the film is made in. These continuities include the use of hybrid musical forms to signify cultural hybridity, as when Isha first steps foot on her uncle's stately grounds, the spatial transition is accompanied by bagpipes mixed with South Asian rhythms (Martin-Jones, 2005b, p. 56). This choice of music is not dissimilar to the principles underlying the usage of bhangra in *Ae Fond Kiss* or other British-Asian films which I discussed above. Another point of similarity between *PIAM* and British-Asian films is what Martin-Jones describes as *PIAM*'s 'postcolonial role-reversal' in which, with Lord Inder's retinue of white servants, 'colonial servants have become the NRI masters' (2005b, p. 56). Such a depiction within the British-Asian context recalls one of the post-imperial master-slave inversions noted by Hill in *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1999, p. 210).

There is also an element of the film which Martin-Jones does not discuss in detail, but which is apparent from the sketch of the plot provided above. *PIAM*'s plot is structured around an opposition between the traditional homeland and the modern west, and though the film does largely embrace the traditional values of the Indian middle-class as Martin-Jones argues, it also nonetheless presents India and the traditional values it represents as oppressive for Isha, values that she needs to flee. It is only by coming to Scotland that Isha is able to follow her heart, avoid the traditional arranged marriage to Yash, and meet Guarav, who she eventually marries. The reliance on the arranged marriage as a plot device, along with the related flight to the west to escape such marriages, are also to be found in a number of NRI films including *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Aditya Chopra, 1995) and the aforementioned *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*. Such a plot device and the concomitant

opposition of traditional cultures to the modern world brings us back to *Ae Fond Kiss* and a host of other depictions of British-Asian culture such as *East is East*.

Cultural hybridity, play with ideas of postcolonial national identity, and the conflict between generations of migrant populations – in short all of the themes which characterise canonical British-Asian films – are thus to be found in *PIAM* and a number of other Hindi-language films. A major difference between *PIAM* and its British and Scottish counterparts, however, is in terms of style and representation. *PIAM* provides a highly unrealistic, tourist-oriented view of Scotland and thematically asserts ‘Indianness’ as the cardinal value to aspire to. As Martin-Jones’s analysis of Isha’s arrival at Lord Inder’s stately country home shows, the film offers a range of images associated with Scotland that are very much akin to tartanry, including tartan clothing, bagpipes, falconers and even a servant dressed like a character out of *Braveheart* (2005b, p. 56). Likewise apropos is Martin-Jones’s assessment of the ways in which the film continually asserts that the Scottish-Asian characters are first and foremost members of the ‘global Indian middle-class’ (2005b, p. 57). This is such a strong current in the film that Martin-Jones can demonstrate its existence without mentioning the most blatant moment of Indian patriotism in the film, which comes when the family celebrates India’s Independence Day, complete with a raising of the Indian flag over the Scottish manor house, a moment of intense patriotism on par with the climactic scenes of *Khabhi Khushi Khabie Gham* which features the child of NRI parents defiantly singing the Indian national anthem instead of the British one at a school concert.

But there are dangers in reading too much into these expressions of Indian patriotism, and doing so can obscure the value of such films for Scottish and British film culture. Firstly, so called NRI films are not monolithic in their representations of

the diaspora. A film like *Pardes* (Subhash Gai, 1997) is extremely negative in its depiction of diasporic Indians, with American NRI Rajiv (Apoorva Agnihotri) leading a morally dissolute lifestyle and at a climactic moment trying to rape his Indian fiancée in a drunken rage. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is more ambiguous as it thematically upholds traditional Indian values in some senses but also has a plot which revolves around the resistance of the traditional arranged marriage and concludes with its protagonists leaving the Punjab to return to their lives in London. *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* (Karan Johar, 2006), in contrast, is much more critical of traditional Indian attitudes towards marriage and divorce and has its main love interests (American NRIs) embark on an extramarital affair before divorcing their spouses and marrying one another. Given such a spectrum of attitudes towards India (which it should be remembered would not be the 'homeland' for much of the South Asian diasporic community in Britain that consumes Indian cinema), it is important to remember that *PIAM* is only one representation within a larger trend, and its apparent attitudes toward nationality are not necessarily indicative of those of all other Hindi-language NRI films. Secondly, audiences do not consume such apparently patriotic texts in the way that critics may assume. Rather than making viewers into militant Indian nationalists, audience research into Hindi-language film consumption in Britain has suggested that such films create a space for escapism from the realities of racism and economic privation for ethnically South Asian audiences in Britain (Dwyer, 2006, p. 367; Banaji, 2006, p. 51). Given such consumption, I would agree with Anne Jäckel's description of the presence of Indian films in British cinemas as one of the culturally progressive innovations in film exhibition provided by the advent of the multiplex (2005, p. 135).

A related point is the difficulty of reading such pro-Indian ideologies into the films in the first place. Discussing the representation of the Scottish NRI community in *PIAM*, Martin-Jones notes the lack of speaking white characters in the film and writes that

[T]he streets and public transport systems of Scotland are eerily empty in *Pyaar*, as though the NRI characters live a life that bypasses the other residents of Scotland. Any suggestions that NRI identity has been ‘contaminated’ by interaction with the Scottish population is completely ignored. In fact, *this may be an accurate reflection of life for many Scottish NRI communities*, but this is predominantly used to show how the NRI remain part of the global Indian middle class. (2005b, p. 57; emphasis added)

There are two problems in this reading of the film. The first is that it assumes realism to be the standard against which the film should be measured. Martin-Jones makes this point based on the film not seeming to represent the actual ethnic make up of Scotland – which is of course predominantly white – or the actual relationships between the cultures of ethnic minorities with the majority of the population. Lacking such representation, Martin-Jones speculates that this may be because NRI communities don’t actually interact with the white majority. But Indian popular cinema does not generally place a great deal of value on realism, and neither does *PIAM* (as can be seen in the decided lack of plausibility in the film’s plot which I outlined above). Attempting to read the film in such terms is therefore somewhat problematic, which leads to the other problem with Martin-Jones’s reading which is that it presents the film as an allegorical representation of Scottish-Asians. There is no reason to draw conclusions about the sociology of the Scottish NRI community from watching the film as Martin-Jones does here, and we must therefore look elsewhere, particularly to audience research and study of consumption patterns, to more

accurately appreciate the importance of Hindi-language film production for Scottish-Asian and British-Asian audiences.

To return to the main thrust of Martin-Jones's argument regarding the necessity of appreciating the commercial importance of Indian film productions within Scotland, such a viewpoint is very persuasive and necessary as it goes, but it is not all that can be said about the films from a cultural point of view. To concentrate solely on economics – 'the considerable revenue' that such films bring into Scotland including at the box office (2005b, p. 58) – and to accept the film's presentation of the Indian diaspora as a sociological phenomenon completely isolated from Scottish culture is to severely underestimate their value for Scotland and Britain. What I hope is apparent by this point is that there are a number of ways in which NRI films such as *PIAM* can be considered to have relevance in terms of dealing with the complexities of the diasporic experience. Combined with the popularity of such films with minority audiences, the fact that the films are sometimes made in Scotland and Britain and, as I will detail shortly, with British and Scottish funding, this makes the case for considering them in principle as a vital part of not only the Scottish/British film industry but also Scottish/British national cinema production, whether one chooses to define it in terms of production, reception or representation.

2.4: Post-Imperial Co-Productions and the Future of Multicultural Scottish Cinema

In this final portion of this chapter, I would like to return briefly to some of the core concerns of the thesis, that being the role that government policy plays in shaping national cinema production in Scotland. The kind of assistance that the film

received, which as discussed previously consisted of location management and other forms of logistical assistance, are not the sort of programmes that are implemented with cultural goals in mind, and were more likely chasing economic gains from hosting ‘run away productions’,⁴⁹ such as those detailed by Martin-Jones. Such reasoning is seemingly the basis for a new series of co-production agreements that the DCMS⁵⁰ is attempting to sign with India as well as a number of other former colonies including Jamaica, South Africa and the dominion nations, amongst others. Although the word ‘culture’ is sometimes used when discussing the treaties, comments from Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell such as, ‘More than 27 million South Africans went to the cinema in 2003. In 2001 India made more than 1,000 films - making it the world's largest feature film producer’ (DCMS, 2005), give the impression that economic matters are still at the top of the decision-making agenda. But from what we have seen in the case of *PIAM* and Hindi-language films in Britain generally, there is a great deal of cultural good coming from such economic arrangements, albeit in ways that were generally not anticipated by policymakers; the causes of providing diversity in media markets and accommodating multicultural tastes are being served by them. Moreover, positive cultural effects are even more likely to stem from such arrangements when the nations involved share a history and large transnational populations, as is the case with Britain and its former colonies. This can be seen in not only the Hindi-language films discussed here but also, for example, in British-African co-productions such as *Shooting Dogs* (Michael Caton-Jones, 2005) and *The Last King of Scotland*, which re-examine the legacy of colonialism in Africa. Future bilateral co-production treaties will increase the likelihood that the UK partners on these productions will continue to ensure local distribution of whatever films end up being made, and will thus maintain these alternative mediaspheres, and will also provide

media industry employment opportunities for members of those diasporas, yet another of the possible meanings for the term 'diversity' which circulate within policy discourses.

Conclusion: Diversity and Policy in Scottish Cinema

Returning to the proposal with which this chapter opened, we find that, whereas McGuigan found the exact meaning of a term such as diversity difficult to pin down, the extent to which one can find it being achieved in Scottish cinema by means of policy is surprising in its variety of manifestations. In this chapter I sought to argue that *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* fit a certain sense of the criteria implied in the term. *Ae Fond Kiss* earnestly set out to ameliorate religious, ethnic and generational problems in Scotland, even if it had difficulty in reaching audiences in the UK. This was one of the problems that was foreseen during the application process for public monies, but which, ironically, could be said to have been a result of institutional pressures undermining the authorial brand that was largely responsible for getting the film made in the first place. *Pyaar Ishq aur Mohabbat* and other Hindi-language films hold the promise of reaching British and Scottish-Asian audiences on a scale only dreamt of by many publicly supported films, but these films are also far from straightforward realistic assessments of the diasporic experience, and are tantamount to an alternative popular culture rather than a space for cultural assimilation and exchange. Though each scenario represents a different set of pluses and minuses, when taken together, they demonstrate that the issue is being

addressed in contemporary Scottish cinema in a variety of ways and that differing policy mechanisms are enabling that to take place.

Whether any of this has been intentional or otherwise premeditated by policymakers is another issue. Though ethnic themes were amongst the reasons listed for supporting the making of *Ae Fond Kiss*, authorial persona loomed much larger, and it is unlikely that policymakers envisioned attracting veteran film-makers to Scotland to make films about multiculturalism when they sought to increase the amount of diversity in Scottish cinema. Considered alongside the possibly deleterious effects of commercial pressures on the film and its circulation discussed above, this leaves policy decidedly less responsible for any positive outcomes that may have arisen from the film. The upsurge in Hindi-language film-making in Britain (which has been, and looks to continue to be, fuelled in part by public assistance, and in the future, tax breaks and treaty legislation) was likely not the intention when legislation was drafted, and even when more active pursuit of that line of revenue was embarked upon, it was hardly done so in the name of creating media spaces for otherwise marginalized groups at home. Discussing diversity in Scottish cinema thus means discussing the unintended consequences of intervening in the global image markets with a hat full of public funds rather than the realization of clearly defined goals through execution of pre-set strategies. In each case there have been unexpected results, but these results have nevertheless left indelible marks upon the landscape of the Scottish film industry as well as Scottish national cinema.

Chapter 5: ‘Supporting Artists of Genius’?: Lynne Ramsay, *Morvern Callar* and Scottish Film Policy

Introduction: *Morvern Callar*: A Film Starring Lynne Ramsay

In the opening moments of *Morvern Callar*, rhythmically pulsing lights intermittently show us the face of the eponymous Morvern (Samantha Morton) as she lies with what we discover to be the corpse of her boyfriend, who has committed suicide. This opening performs the function of introducing us to the film’s title character as well as, when we see Morvern reading her boyfriend’s suicide note, her narrative predicament. But the sequence, with its audacious use of light, its eschewal of sound, and its découpage heavy reliant on jump cuts, also introduces the audience to the person who could be considered the film’s main character: its director, Lynne Ramsay. The primacy of Ramsay’s presence behind the camera is something that is subsequently reiterated throughout the film with the stylistic and narrative conventions of art cinema – a mode of film-making which features the director as its commercial and artistic focal point – being deployed at every turn. In addition to these stylistic choices, a number of intertextual references underscore the fact that this is not just an auteur film but is also one made specifically by Lynne Ramsay, director of *Ratecatcher*, and a Scottish female writer/director. The film’s critical reception, which was largely positive at home and abroad, took the film up in these terms. Audiences were not as forthcoming, however, and Ramsay, whose debut feature had also fared poorly at the box office, saw her next project, an adaptation of the best-seller *The Lovely Bones*, taken away from her by its backers and given to *Lord of the Rings* director Peter Jackson. Thus despite great critical acclaim, and a reputation within

Scottish cinema circles as *the* important new voice for the emerging national cinema. Ramsay found herself in a forced, prolonged hiatus from film-making.

But understanding the significance of *Morvern Callar* and all that came afterward requires that we first tell another story, that of Ramsay herself. In this chapter I will undertake to examine the career of Lynne Ramsay, focusing on her privileged place in accounts of contemporary Scottish cinema, tracing the development of her reputation as one of Scottish cinema's most gifted film-makers, and most importantly, considering the relationship of her films and her reputation to the funding structures from which her career has benefited. As we will see, the career of a figure such as Lynne Ramsay is an object of study that yields a great number of insights: into the modes, practices and audiences of contemporary art cinema; into the landscape of small film industries such as that in Scotland in the early twenty-first century, which are inextricably bound up with cultural policy initiatives, but which must also reckon with the realities of the marketplace; and finally into the centrality of authorship, or more precisely *auteurship* to all of these concerns. In order to undertake such an analysis, we should begin with some account of Ramsay's critical reputation within Scottish and British film historiographies, and how that reputation is intertwined with historiographical representations of the nature of film policy in Scotland.

Section 1: Ramsay in Scottish Film Historiography

1.1: The Achievement of Having Discernible Auteurs

As I sought to demonstrate earlier in this thesis, Petrie's narrative in *Screening Scotland* is oriented towards showcasing the achievements of what he terms the 'new Scottish cinema', a movement which features Lynne Ramsay and Peter Mullan as its leading lights. Implicit in the titling of 'new' cinema is a privileging of director-driven film-making such as that found in the French *Nouvelle Vague*, or the 'new German cinema', each of which have become historically synonymous with names such as Godard, Truffaut, Varda, Herzog, Fassbinder and the like. It is thus not surprising that Petrie's account culminates with authorial cinema, portraying the emergence of distinctive writer/directors. Hence the book begins and ends with the release of Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* and Mullan's *Orphans* (2000a, pp. 1, 226). The two are described as having 'iconoclastic visions' and 'distinctive style and thematic concerns' (2000a, p. 181) (a description I will return to later in this chapter). Besides the artistry and innovation that their films may display, for Petrie's account it is just as important that they simply have emerged and are distinctive artists, which have long held to be lacking in Scottish cinema.⁵¹

There is a great deal of significance attributed by Petrie, as well as by later writers, to the emergence of Ramsay and Mullan besides simply providing the nation with auteur directors. Their emergence is described as showing the formation of a discernible tradition of Scottish art cinema (Petrie, 2000a, p. 161; Petrie, 2004, p. 167; Blandford, 2007, p. 77) and as being emblematic of Scotland political devolution from the United Kingdom (Petrie, 2000a, p. 191). Blandford's account in particular posits *Ratcatcher* as the culmination of a tradition of art cinema beginning with Bill Douglas (2007, p. 77) and describes the importance of *Morvern Callar* as residing in its 'extension of of the idea of Scotland as the chief outpost of serious, demanding independent cinema which in turn can be connected to the broader desire to foster

cultural independence post-devolution` (2007, p. 79). As important as these claims are, most interesting for our current purposes is something else that Scottish cinema historians have described Ramsay's films in particular as illustrating: the effectiveness of policy interventions in positively shaping Scottish national cinema production.

1.2: Fulfilling the Promises of Policy

As demonstrated earlier in this thesis, the `new Scottish cinema` is depicted by Petrie as a positive outcome of policy innovations in the Scottish film industry, particularly increased resources for production finance. Within this framework, the career of Lynne Ramsay is particularly significant. *Ratcatcher* is listed amongst the films that Petrie gives as examples of funding structures increasing access for women to film-making in Scotland, and in cultural terms, `engage[ing] in important ways with female experience` in an otherwise masculine-orientated tradition (2000b, pp. 167-168). In this vein it is highlighted as only the second feature written and directed by a woman in Scotland (the first being Margaret Tait's *Blue Black Permanent* [1992]) (Petrie, 2004, p. 66). Petrie's accounts of institutional interventions in the career of Lynne Ramsay and other newly emerging directors also praises the role that short film schemes, such as BBC Scotland's *Tartan Shorts*, have played in developing the film-making skills and industrial profiles of such directors, especially Mullan and Ramsay (2000b, pp. 160-162).

Petrie is not the only historian who has described Ramsay's films as realizing the promise of film policy in Britain and Scotland. Mike Wayne has described *Ratcatcher*, along with *Beautiful People* (Jasmin Dizdar, 1999), as the `only

successful films' funded by the National Lottery in Britain (2002, p. 41). Murray has described it as having the following significance for Scottish cinema:

Ratcatcher's remarkable domestic and international critical successes constituted proof positive that productive Scottish cultural and industrial appropriations of a US precedent can form one aspect of the ongoing consolidation of a progressive national film culture and a viable production base. (2005b, p. 221)

For Murray, then, the film marks the realisation of all that was hoped for since the late 1970s for Scottish cinema, and this success can be credited to the policy systems which he argues are modeled on those of American independent cinema.

In some ways this version of the story of Lynne Ramsay's film-making career cannot be disputed. All of Ramsay's films have depended on public support, typically a combination of Lottery subsidy and funding from BBC Scotland, and it is thus difficult to imagine that she would have been able to make films without these institutions. But this doesn't tell the whole story. In what follows, I will argue that Ramsay's relationship to policy is significantly more complex than simply providing the financial basis for a new artist to succeed, and in doing so I will also seek to explore what Ramsay's career after *Morvern Callar* tells us about the optimistic narratives presented by Scottish cinema historians. In order to do so, I will begin by looking at the Scottish Screen funding application for *Morvern Callar*, seeking to ascertain how it relates to Ramsay as an emerging Scottish artist and to determine what sort of institutional goals can be detected in relation to the film itself.

Section 2: Policy in Action: Funding *Morvern Callar*

2.1: *Morvern Callar*: The Lottery Application

The makers of *Morvern Callar* applied for and received a production subsidy of £500,000 from Scottish Screen. After four years of developing the project at BBC Scotland, the film's producers, Company Pictures, submitted an application to Scottish Screen in February of 2000 (Scottish Screen, 2000). Before examining the application in detail, it is important to note that the funding application itself is not the complete document package that would be ideal for this kind of inquiry. Though the main body of the application is currently accessible, other key materials, such as the statement of the Lottery Panel explaining their reasons for supporting the application, could not be obtained. Without this statement it is not possible to be certain what exactly the Panel found attractive in the application. Nevertheless, it is possible from looking closely at the language of the application to at least determine what it was that the applicants thought the Panel would want to read in such an application. That is to say that by noting the points of emphasis in what was, after all, a successful application, it is possible to at least observe the discursive patterns within which the film-makers sought to frame their application in terms of qualities that they assumed Scottish Screen would be seeking to support. Although there are a number of aspects of the film's Lottery application that are significant from the point-of-view of the national cinema historian (such as those pertaining to national representation and public service), the analysis here will be restricted to the theme of authorship, which dominates Ramsay's position in Scottish film historiography and film culture generally.

Section 2.2: Searching for the 'Female *Trainspotting*': High Concept, Cross-Over and the Funding of *Morvern Callar*

With such a framework in place, I will begin my reading of the application with one question and answer in particular which carries a great deal of discursive weight within the application and which brings us back to what is by now a familiar ideal of film production in Scotland and Britain during the period that this thesis is concerned with: that of the ‘cross-over’ film. Question eighteen reads ‘Please give a brief summary (no more than 30 words) of the film you plan to make with lottery funds’. The applicants’ response:

Based on Alan Warners [sic] novel (“Morvern Callar”), Lynne Ramsay’s rites of passage film about love, lust, growing up and escape, describes the extraordinary journey of a teenage girl from the West Coast of Scotland to the clubs and villages of Spain.(Scottish Screen, 2000)⁵²

To consider the significance of this passage, we should keep its context in the application process in mind. The application instructions say of this summary: ‘We will use this description as the basis for all our communications and it may appear in press releases’ (Scottish Screen, 2000). This summary will thus become the ‘blurb’ that will stand in for the project as a whole for many readers, including those within Scottish Screen and the journalistic press, and it is easy to imagine that many who handled the application only understood the project in terms of this summary. This description did indeed act as the way in which Scottish Screen described the film on at least one version of its website up until 2005 (Scottish Screen, 2005).

The way in which this statement consistently reappeared from this initial production stage through to post-production and advertising, both for the film itself and the institution that supported it, brings us back to the logic of ‘high concept’ discussed earlier in relation to *Local Hero*. High concept thinking, according to Wyatt, seeks to bring as many pre-constituted audiences as possible to any given film.

typically through some combination of genre, star, directors or source material (1994, pp. 8-13). Something akin to high concept can be seen in this description, which brings together two ostensibly preconstituted audiences, those for the novel and those for director Lynne Ramsay, along with language implying generic attractions such as 'love, lust, growing up and escape' (Scottish Screen, 2000). To use the algebraic thinking that Wyatt argues characterizes high concept logic in the American entertainment industries (1994, p. 13), we could render this passage as roughly: Alan Warner + Lynne Ramsay = female *Trainspotting*. This formula, as it is manifest in the application, will be very important for my argument throughout this chapter, not the least for its echoes of one of the great 'cross-over' successes of the 1990s, but for now I would like to concentrate on the personnel involved.

The Warner and *Trainspotting* parts of this equation are linked in relation to the built-in audiences that the could have reasonably expected to come with the film's source novel, taking into account the cult status of Warner's novel, which as Petrie and Sophie Dale have shown, had achieved a relatively high degree of commercial success, largely on the coattails of the success of Irvine Welsh's novel (Petrie, 2004, p. 96; Dale, 2002, p. 77). The novel's popularity and association with *Trainspotting* lead to BBC Scotland optioning the rights to adapt it and commissioning a screenplay to be written before the book had even been published (Dale, 2002, p. 79; Forde, 2002, p. 21). Moreover, with the subsequent critical and popular successes of *These Demented Lands* (1997) and *The Sopranos* (1998) by the time the application was submitted, Warner was indeed a name that, while still not on par with Irvine Welsh, would have commanded some kind of audience. So Warner's part in the high concept formulation makes sense, and it is not surprising that Warner is mentioned repeatedly throughout the application (five times in total). Despite this position as an established

author with a popular following, Warner's role in the discourse of the funding application is dwarfed by the other name in this high concept formulation, as, in addition to this opening mention, Lynne Ramsay is mentioned in eight of the fifteen questions in the section of the application entitled 'meeting the criteria'. It is to these mentions and their tone and content, that I now turn.

2.3: The Lottery Application's 'Lynne'

The appeals to Ramsay's caché as a director are most clearly crystallized in the applicants' response to question thirty-seven, 'How have you found out whether there is a demand for your film?'. The applicants begin their response here by discussing the prestige associated with Lynne Ramsay the brand:

Given the excitement, critical acclaim, and festival prizes generated by Lynne Ramsay's first full length film *Ratcatcher*, we feel confident that there is already a demand for *Morvern Callar*. Lynne Ramsay is an unusually talented and exciting director who will ensure that this film will be strikingly original, memorable and accessible. (Scottish Screen, 2000)

The desire to present Ramsay as the project's major attraction can be seen by the sheer number of adjectives for both film-maker and film used in a passage consisting of only two sentence. In terms of the film-maker, we have 'critical acclaim' and 'festival prizes' as well as terms such as 'excitement', 'unusually talented' and 'exciting', with built in audiences being all but promised in connection with all of these attributes. Likewise do we have a similar effusiveness to describe the film itself, with 'strikingly original, memorable and accessible'.

Before moving on to other variations on Ramsay's auteur credentials in the application, it is worth noting that in this passage the applicants add the word

‘accessible’ to the list of adjectives for the project, a word that would only be used if there was some reason to doubt that it would be so. This term subtly demonstrates the hopes on the part of the applicants to frame the film as one that will not be stuck in the ‘cultural ghetto’ that art films sometimes fall into, and that the film will instead ‘cross-over’ to mainstream audiences. Such an implication dovetails with the language of the high-concept blurb which also stresses generic aspects of the film that would allow for greater audience appeal.

The varied usage of Ramsay the brand is not limited to assurances that her involvement will bring in audiences. The other major usage of authorship by the applicants – one which somewhat contradicts assurances of audience appeal – is to appeal to Scottish Screen to ensure that Ramsay can express herself without pressures from the marketplace. Rhetoric relating to Ramsay’s genius and the need for Scottish Screen to help develop it, is seen in the passages discussed above referring to Ramsay’s success on the festival circuit and her ‘unusual’ talent, but also in more subtle passages such as one that comes in response to question number forty-seven, ‘How will lottery funding add value to your project?’:

This highly visual, teenage inspired film, set in both Scotland and Spain, seems the perfect next step for director Lynne Ramsay. We believe we have achieved a realistic budget and schedule to enable Lynne to make a visually stunning and emotionally powerful film. The lottery funding will be essential for us to achieve this project. (Scottish Screen, 2000)

The first thing worth noting in this passage is the phrase ‘the perfect next step’ for Ramsay, which seems to be directly referencing Scottish Screen’s mandate to develop promising talent. The second important thing here is the reiteration of the word ‘visual’, which like ‘strikingly original’, is a way to discursively emphasize Ramsay’s cinematic artistry. It is also a word that recurs throughout discourses of British film

policy, as ideal candidates for governmental support are described by a number of veterans of Lottery Panels as possessing ‘very *visual* scripts,’ (Petrie 2005b; Shannon, 2005). It is also a term which, with its allusion to vision, implicitly references command of the medium of cinema instead of reliance on dialogue or plot. Again we should note how this promise of a ‘visually stunning’ film is mentioned alongside its promise to also be ‘emotionally powerful’. This shows that the applicants are carefully trying to present the film as one with both artistic and audience appeal.

Carrying on from the last sentence of this passage, ‘The lottery funding will be essential for us to achieve this project’, we can see the applicants implicitly making the case that visionary artists such as Lynne Ramsay, as they have described her, can only realize their visions with the help of bodies such as Scottish Screen, thereby appealing to the body to act as an instrument of market protection. This is made more explicit in the response to the next question (Q48), ‘Why can you not make your film with money from other sources’:

We feel that Arts Council funding is vital for this film: It is important that the production process of *Morvern Callar* is not compromised by the demands of purely commercial backing. The lead roles are both for young Scottish actresses, and we believe that the film will suffer if Lynne is forced to go for marquee ‘star’ casting. (Scottish Screen, 2000)

The plea here is one that recalls one of the most basic arguments for the cultural necessity of subsidizing film production: that artists need to be sheltered from the demands inherent in the marketplace in order to be able to fully express themselves. Despite the hints in the application detailed above regarding the possible commercial viability of *Morvern Callar*, the sentiment expressed in the first sentence is that this is not a commercial project and that it would be substantially impaired if it were subjected to the same pressures that commercial films face. But there is considerable

subtlety and nuance in the second sentence. Instead of using non-commercial aspects of the film – such as its indeterminate ending or lack of access to character psychology – as examples of potential-commercially oriented changes, the applicants provide an example that is simply illustrated but also works as a significant act of flag-waving. By suggesting that commercial backing would threaten the Scottishness of the film or hurt the Scottish film industry by compelling the film-makers to hire non-Scottish actors, the applicants manage to align artistic integrity with national concerns, thereby simultaneously appealing to a number of Scottish Screen's mandates.⁵³

2.4: A Knowable Ramsay?

The final thing worth pointing out for our current purposes is the seemingly innocent ways in which the two previously cited passages from the application refer to Ramsay herself. The informality of the applicants' references to 'Lynne' in both responses underscores – albeit very subtly – the familiarity that Ramsay as a director seems to be able to command in this application. To return briefly to discursive imbalance between mentions of Ramsay and the much more established, and in Scottish terms equally 'local', Alan Warner, we should pause to remember the state of Ramsay's career at this point. In February of 2000, Ramsay had made three short films – albeit ones which had received prestigious prizes – and only one feature film, which was released three months before the application was submitted and which had attracted less than 100,000 admissions at the British box office (Lumiere Database, 2007). How is it that Ramsay could have been recognisable enough at this point in time to base the primary appeal of a funding application on her participation in the

project? Though her films were not widely seen, Ramsay herself was becoming known as a female Scottish artist, and her emerging reputation can be seen by looking at the promotion and reception of her films up to and including *Ratcatcher*, both of which placed a great deal of emphasis on Ramsay herself as an auteur director, a status not necessarily dependent on her films being very widely known or seen. It is to this seemingly paradoxical status and how Ramsay came to inhabit it that I now turn.

Section 3: The Emergence of a Ramsay Persona

3.1: Ramsay as Star Director: Reading the Director's Interview

Cinematic authorship is no longer, if indeed it ever was, simply a matter of intertextual relationships between films directed by the same person. As Timothy Corrigan has argued, the figure of the auteur director in contemporary cinema has become a star personality that precedes and exceeds the films they make to the extent that it is often possible to talk about a director's persona in much the same way that one speaks of certain actors' star personae (Corrigan, 1991, pp. 103-105). Does Lynne Ramsay have an auteur persona? If so what is it like and what values does it embody? To answer such questions, my analysis in this section of the chapter will take as its object what Corrigan describes as the most commonly used mechanism for the commercial promotion of star directors, the interview (1991, p. 102), but will also draw on the insights of Catherine Grant (2000) and Devin Orgeron (2007), who have shown that Corrigan's principles can be said to extend to other materials such as internet-based promotional practices and DVD extras, amongst others. Just as Corrigan charted the propagation of the personae of Coppola, Kluge and Ruiz

through the discourse of journalistic interviews and Orgeron charted a similar propagation in the case of Wes Anderson, so will I here attempt to reconstruct the emergence of the persona of Lynne Ramsay.

One indication of the extent to which Ramsay has been discursively constructed as an auteur is not just that she grants interviews as a part of the promotion of her films, but in the sheer number of interviews that exist. In his survey of the critical literature on Scottish cinema over the last sixty-six years, Murray (2005a) lists eleven interviews with Lynne Ramsay, to which I would add an additional fifteen to be found on the internet, in newspapers and on the DVD releases of *Ratcatcher* and *Morvern Callar*.⁵⁴ For a sense of scale, this number compares to a total of eleven interviews with Bill Forsyth and two with *Mrs. Brown* director John Madden, according to Murray's bibliography and my own attempts to find further interviews. Who was the 'star' of *Ratcatcher*? There are at least eleven interviews with Lynne Ramsay in relation to the film, sometimes along with her team of collaborators, (cinematographer) Alwin Kuchler, (editor) Lucia Zucchetti and (set designer) Jane Morton discussing the film, but none with any of the actors in the film. (As Orgeron argues in the case of Wes Anderson's interviews with his regular cast of collaborators, by foregrounding the collective nature of film-making, directors simultaneously reinforce their auteurship as the one leading the collective [2007, p. 59].) *Morvern Callar* is a slightly different case. Whereas *Ratcatcher*'s cast was mainly non-professional and/or unknown actors, there was a recognizable actor in *Morvern Callar*, Samantha Morton. This difference notwithstanding, there are four interviews in print with Samantha Morton regarding the film and eleven with Lynne Ramsay, along with two featuring both of them. Moreover, two of the interviews with Ramsay precede even the promotional campaigns for *Ratcatcher* (James, 1998;

Pendreigh, 1998). Having thus appreciated the extent of Ramsay's films' publicity campaigns being aligned with her authorial persona based on the sheer quantity of interviews, we can now look to how that persona is presented to the public in those interviews. In what follows, I will attempt to sketch the salient features of the Ramsay persona, focusing mainly on interviews predating the *Morvern Callar* application so as to be sure that the context being reconstructed is that which would have influenced the application and film under discussion.

3.2: The Ramsay Persona I: The Reluctant, Rebellious Auteur

The most prominent, and indeed structuring, feature of the Lynne Ramsay persona in her interviews before and after *Morvern Callar* is her apparent unwillingness to take the position of an auteur film-maker, to categorise her films, or to present herself as an artist whose films are influenced by her gender, her class, or the works of other film-makers. Each of these postures are invariably contradicted and/or problematized by Ramsay's own comments, which also speak of her personal vision in making her films, her sensibility and perspective as a working-class Scottish woman, and the influence of film-makers such as Robert Bresson, John Cassavetes and Terence Malick (amongst others) on her film-making. There are thus two layers to Ramsay's persona. One layer stresses her innocence of categories that could be imposed upon her work, creating an image of a self-effacing, unpretentious/anti-intellectual, seemingly natural talent who has found herself at odds with the industrial establishment. The other layer shows her to be aware of and having detailed knowledge of those categories and a degree of critical savvy when it comes to her films' relationships to them.

We can see all of this at work when Ramsay discusses her career path beginning with her application to the National Film and Television School (NFTS) up to the commissioning of *Ratcatcher* by BBC Scotland. Regarding her application to the NFTS, Ramsay in several interviews stresses the unlikeliness of both her application and her subsequent admission. Asked by Graham Fuller about her decision to become a film director, she replies:

I didn't [choose]. I didn't know anything about films. I sent my pictures to the National Film and Television School the night before my application was due, and was really surprised when they accepted me for the cinematography course. I was pretty naive about it all. I couldn't even move the camera. I think I was the least experienced person on the course. (2000, p. 2)

Instead of describing at length the various films she loved growing up or her ardent desire to make films, in a stroke of cool 'slacker' detachment Ramsay makes her application sound like total happenstance. In another interview she is even more explicit in this vein, saying of her application and admission to the school, 'It was a total fluke. I was going out with this guy and he had always wanted to go to film school. At Napier there was a notice up on the board for the NFTS, and for me it was just a whim: "That sounds interesting, I'll send in some of my pictures"' (MacDonald, 2002, p. 111). Here we can also see more clearly the self-effacing elements of Ramsay's autobiography: not only did she not know anything about film, she was just applying on impulse and she only got the idea from her boyfriend. (This last possibility also subtly invokes her gender position, an issue that grows in prominence throughout the promotion of her work, especially in the case of *Morvern Callar*.)

Anecdotes of innocence and naïvete are also used by Ramsay to describe the way in which she landed a BBC Scotland commission to make *Ratcatcher*, saying that she was asked to write a treatment for the film: 'I hardly knew what a treatment was. I

never did the writing course at film school [...] I wrote about 50 or 60 pages and added some still images [...] I don't know if any of it made any sense at that point. but I think they thought it was interesting' (*Ratcatcher* DVD Interview). Besides her supposed innocence of the workings of the film industry, but still related to it, what is also evoked in these anecdotes is Ramsay's position outside of the mainstream of the film-making establishment, a position she underscores with stories of her conflicts with her instructors at the NFTS who didn't understand her work or what she was trying to do. Implicitly referencing her class position, she describes the NFTS as being 'like a public school', and relates anecdotes showing the obtuseness of her tutors at the school, such as one who suggested she have the girls in the 'Holy Cow' segment of her short film *Small Deaths* (1996) try to resuscitate the dying cow they find in a field (MacDonald, 2002, p. 113, 119).

Interestingly, given this thesis's concern with public funding structures, Ramsay's persona as someone at odds with the film-making establishment includes depicting subsidy bodies as one of the forces of constraint in her career. In one interview she gives an account of her resistance to pressures from the head of the *Tartan Shorts* programme to make changes to the scripts for her short films, saying that she 'stuck to her guns' and adhered to her own vision (Elsey, 2002, p. 56). This vision is even emphasized at the expense of the 'audience':

Interviewer: When you were making *Gasman* did you think about audience?

Ramsay: No, never. I try to make a film in a way I would like it, and hope other people like it, because I feel honest about what I'm doing. That tends to work so far. (Elsey, 2002, p. 59)

Despite all her modesty, Ramsay thus portrays herself in interviews as an untutored, unrefined, but self-possessed film-making artist who has always found herself at odds

with orthodoxy and commercial interests, an image roughly akin to the Romantic personae of a number of renowned auteur directors such as Herzog, Fassbinder and Coppola. The irony here being that Ramsay has been trained at the United Kingdom's most prestigious school and has received public subsidies from the British film-making establishment for all of her films up to and including the production of *Morvern Callar*.

3.3: The Ramsay Persona II: Influences and Traditions

Closely intertwined with Ramsay's persona as an innocent, untutored filmmaker is the extent to which her works show the influence, and by implication participate 'in the tradition of' a number of art cinema directors. As discussed earlier in the chapter, national cinema historians have been concerned with aligning Ramsay's work with a number of predecessors and 'traditions' and we can see her comments on this subject as encouraging such a reading strategy. The specific names mentioned in interviews vary, but those most consistently mentioned are those of Michelangelo Antonioni, Terence Malick, Bill Douglas, Maya Deren and, most commonly of all, Robert Bresson. In keeping with Ramsay's self-presentation as someone 'innocent' of academic training in film, she has claimed to not have seen any works by the above film-makers before beginning her studies at the NFTS, with the exception of Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), which is variously reputed to be the inspiration for Ramsay to go to film school (Bauer, 2000) or as a general demonstration of the artistic potential of cinema to the young Ramsay (MacDonald, 2002, p. 111). When asked about her viewing, Ramsay has credited the NFTS curriculum for introducing her to the masterpieces of cinema (Brooks, 1999a, p. 12),

but cites Bresson as an influence that went above and beyond the training provided to her. Asked about her reading of Bresson's *Notes on Cinematography*, she responds in a way that foregrounds on one hand her intellectual connection with the French filmmaker and on the other hand allows her another opportunity to reiterate her antipathy to the NFTS establishment:

That book [*Notes*] was the antithesis of what I was being taught at film school. It was like finding a diamond in the rough. It was great to find something that I identified with just at the time when my ideas about film were evolving. It really became a kind of bible. A few of his [Bresson's] films are masterpieces. It is tough cinema for some people, but for me, it's the purest form of cinema. (Francke, 1999, p. xiii)

Here Ramsay presents herself as seeking out a canonical art cinema filmmaker in spite of the film school environment, an environment that is implicitly presented as antithetical to her own brand of film-making, thereby casting herself as a learned outsider.

Though Ramsay aligns her film-making practice with that of Bresson's, she is also quick to deny any direct influence, telling Lizze Francke that she didn't watch Bresson's *Mouchette* (1967) – a film which *Ratcatcher*'s story and style closely resemble – while working on her film (1999, p. viii), and saying in another interview (again invoking gender): 'I wish I'd never mentioned Bresson. I'm not trying to make a homage or a pastiche like all those Tarantino copycats, those film boys who are just making wank' (Brooks, 1999a, p. 12). Such hostility to being thought of in comparison to other film-makers, or having her work classified at all, is also shown by Ramsay when discussing the cinematic 'traditions' she sees her work as taking part in. In several interviews, for example, she takes issue with being considered as part of British social realism and complains about comparisons to Ken Loach or Mike Leigh

(Brooks, 1999a, p. 12; Bailey, 2000). But then Ramsay seemingly encourages these types of reading strategies by doing things like writing newspaper pieces about films such as *Mouchette* (Ramsay, 2000) and, after the release of *Morvern Callar*, Cassavetes's *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974) (Donaldson, 2002), or participating in a dual interview with Mike Leigh in which the two film-makers complain about their work being lumped together by critics (Ramsay and Leigh, 2005).

3.4: The Ramsay Persona III: On Being a Working-Class Scottish Female Director

Ramsay's seeming resistance to, and subtle encouragement of, her work being subsumed into larger categories of cultural production extends to questions of nationality, class and gender, which are incidentally the three reading strategies most pertinent to the academic treatment of her work. That Ramsay has consistently received questions regarding her position as a Scottish working-class woman can be seen as validating Grant's argument that audiences require particular kinds of stories from particular kinds of auteurs, one of these groups being directors from minority backgrounds (2000, p. 107). So it is that in numerous interviews there is mention of Ramsay's NFTS lecturers being sceptical about her capability of being a film student because she couldn't lift a camera (MacDonald, 2002, p. 115). Again, resistance to what could be perceived as tokenism is apparent in an interview published in *The Independent* in which Ramsay calls discussion of her work under such auspices as 'very condescending' and goes on to say, 'It angers me, actually, because I'd like people to see me as a film-maker first. Everything else is bollocks. I don't want to

start talking about my femininity or wave the tartan flag' (Brooks, 1999a, 12). But then the same piece ends with the assurance that though Ramsay was then residing in London, that she was still in touch with her working-class Scottish roots, saying 'those years spent "hanging out on the streets with all the other kids" are not so easy to shake off. There's still a lot of Maryhill [the working-class section of Glasgow in which Ramsay grew up] in her' (1999a, p. 12). Even if Ramsay herself isn't the agent behind this piece of language – it is instead the the author of the newspaper article (Xan Brooks) – her persona is nonetheless shaped by it, just as Dyer has argued that star personae are not necessarily under the control of the stars in question (1998). Though the piece isn't so self-contradictory when it comes to gender, as I have noted above, the issue was not altogether avoided in other interviews with Ramsay. As we will see, all three of these categories – nation, class, and especially gender – come to figure much more largely in the promotion of *Morvern Callar*.

3.5: The Gap Between Auteur and Director: The Industrial Realities of Ramsay's Film-Making

In order to appreciate some of the contradictions inherent in auteur personae, it is worth noting that the Romantic aspects of Ramsay's authorial persona conceal a number of realities regarding her experience working in the film industry. Documents obtained from BBC Scotland pertaining to the development of both *Ratcatcher* and *Morvern Callar* indicate that Ramsay was not guided solely by her own vision.⁵⁵ These memos and script reports collectively depict Ramsay as receiving constructive criticism and suggestions for changes to the scripts for both films, working with what appear to be script doctors Ruth McCance and Liana Dognini (the latter of whom was

credited as the co-screenwriter of *Morvern Callar*), and willingly changing the scripts at the request of executive producers Barbara McKissack and Andrea Calderwood. One memo in particular, faxed from Ramsay to McCance at some point between February 19th and March 4th 1998, has Ramsay debating the relative merits of several possible endings to the film, offering to write two different endings, and stating outright that she is ‘not married’ to the ending proposed in her initial drafts of the screenplay.⁵⁶

Such apparent comfort with the demands of institutional film-making constraints contrasts sharply with the Romantic, rebellious Ramsay who by her own description ‘sticks to her guns’ when it comes to others interfering with her work. Rather than exposing Ramsay as a charlatan, however, what I would suggest is that these documents actually remind us of the importance of the authorial persona as something which is not real. Instead, in the case of directors like Ramsay, persona is a necessary fiction which satisfies the audience ‘belief that films, though usually produced collectively, are most likely to be *valuable* when they are more or less conspicuously the product of their directors’ (Grant, 2000, p. 101; emphasis in original). This is evidenced by the ways in which *Ratcatcher* – and later *Morvern Callar* – was received by popular culture’s arbiters of the cinematically ‘valuable’: journalistic reviewers.

3.6: The Ramsay Persona in/and the Reception of *Ratcatcher*

As is so often the case, the terms in which *Ratcatcher* was promoted were taken up in the journalistic reception of the film. For our current purposes it is worth looking at how Ramsay’s position as the film’s key creative agent and how the

various parts of her auteur persona discussed above, namely cine-literacy, gender, class and nationality all filter through to the ways in which the film was received and evaluated. To see that the film was perceived as being Lynne Ramsay's can be seen from headlines such as that gracing *The Guardian*'s review of the film: 'Ratcatcher, Lynne Ramsay's spellbinding debut, makes Peter Bradshaw proud of British cinema again' (Bradshaw, 1999), or the numerous reviews that begin by referring to the film as Lynne Ramsay's debut feature (e.g. Quirke, 1999; Orr, 1999). 'Scottishness' also influences the readings found in these reviews, with Scottish columnist Deborah Orr's profile of the film-maker taking this to the most extreme with the headline of her review reading simply, 'Young, Gifted and Scottish' (1999). Similarly did reviewers in North America praise the film as an impressive achievement by a *Scottish* director. A review in *The Chicago Sun-Times*, for example, begins with a sketch of the film as a whole, saying 'Scottish filmmaker Lynne Ramsay enters the sad world of a Glasgow lad...' (Stamets, 2001, p. 31). Influences and traditions abound across all of the reviews with Bresson being mentioned repeatedly (e.g. Brooks, 1999b; Taubin, 2000) as are Scottish and British directors such as Bill Douglas (Orr, 1999), Terence Davies (Romney, 1999) and Ken Loach (*The New York Times*, 2000). Though gender is not often mentioned directly, perhaps because the film is the story of a boy's coming of age, comparisons to Jane Campion and Carine Adler (Romney, 1999; Taubin, 2000; Adams, 2001) – neither of which would be obvious comparisons to *Ratcatcher* in textual terms – suggest that gender was on the minds of some reviewers.

Section 4: *Morvern Callar*: Author in/and Text

The Ramsay persona was thus something that was knowable, recognizable, and endowed with a number of important characteristics in terms of suggested reading strategies by the time *Morvern Callar* was in production. As I hope to have established up to this point, the perception of Ramsay as an auteur director is crucial to the historiography, promotion, reception and funding of her films, to the extent that authorial expectations would have accompanied *Morvern Callar*, even if it was an adaptation from Alan Warner's novel. Can we say that *Morvern Callar* is a 'Lynne Ramsay film'? If so, in what senses is it such? How has the film been branded as such? Generally speaking, how have concerns related to authorship shaped the film? In this section of the chapter I will look at how this persona left its mark on the film itself beginning with how Ramsay sought to make the film her own, a feat that required competing with and in some senses overcoming Alan Warner's position as the more well known author of the source novel.

4.1: The Contested Authorship of *Morvern Callar*

As mentioned previously, the anticipation of Warner's novel was such that BBC Scotland optioned the film rights on it before it was even completed (Forde, 2001, p. 21; Dale, 2002, p. 77). Though Neely and Dale describe the subsequent relationship between Warner and Ramsay – who was working on the project from at least as early as June of 1998 – as essentially amicable and mutually beneficial (Neely, 2003, pp. 240-241; Dale, 2002, p. 79) it appears that Warner's input into the project itself was not substantial or indeed welcomed by the film-makers. After the novel was optioned Warner was commissioned to write a screenplay. Reports in the trade press have it that his version of the script was subsequently wholly discarded by

Ramsay and Dognini (Forde, 2001, p. 21). and indeed memos from the BBC indicate that there were numerous problems with Warner's screenplay (McCance, 1996).⁵⁷

Warner's role was thus very limited and at least one report has the relationship between Warner and Ramsay as being one of acrimony and authorial rivalry. An interview piece with Warner for *The Times* paints the relationship between the two as very acrimonious indeed (Rees, 2002). Here, Warner claims to have gone for two years during the making of the film without speaking to Ramsay, and he 'went f***** nuts' when Ramsay suggested changing the title of the film, effectively erasing the most obvious signs of Warner's authorship (Rees, 2002; asterisks in original). He then goes on a diatribe in which he calls adaptation 'every writer's worst nightmare' and says that film-makers only use published fiction as source material 'because they can't write good scripts' on their own (Rees, 2002). The writer of the piece, Jesper Rees, also paraphrases Warner as comparing Ramsay to the novel's Morvern as they both stole the works of other writers and passed them off as their own (Rees, 2002). Though in this context I am using this article as a source of information, it is also a piece of promotion which I would argue helps to bolster Ramsay's persona as an uncompromising auteur, helping to discursively brand the film as Ramsay's.

This discursive re-branding is matched by certain stylistic decisions that occurred during the adaptation of the book into the film. By looking at a few of these changes in some detail we can appreciate the extent to which Ramsay sought to brand the film as her own, to make her vision paramount and put the film squarely in the category of director-driven art cinema. Here, I will discuss two kinds of changes in the adaptation of the film from the novel. The first consist of alterations to plot and point-of-view which have a significant impact on the thematic and aesthetic outcomes

of the film vis-à-vis the novel. These changes, when considered in the context of film history, are discernible as rather orthodox conventions of the mode of art cinema described influentially by David Bordwell (1986, pp. 205-233; 2002). The second kind of changes I will be concerned with are those which aren't as radical in their alterations to plot and theme but still serve to remind us that Lynne Ramsay, personally, is the creative force behind the film.

4.2: Putting the Ramsay Stamp on the Film: Classical Art Cinema Style

In discussing Ramsay and Dognini's changes, we should begin with what is arguably the most significant difference between the film and the book, that being the change in narrative perspective. The book is written from the point-of-view of Morvern and its narration consists of a virtual monologue that dictates all of the action of the plot as well as Morvern's thoughts and observations of the world around her. Despite the alignment of the audience with her, the book does not provide much direct psychological access to Morvern. Morvern simply records the events and experiences of the book's events without much in the way of commentary or explanation. The onus is then on the reader to decipher the significance of what is being described. Dale describes this aspect of the novel rather succinctly when she writes that, 'As a narrator, Morvern conceals her thoughts and works through indirection such that the reader is intrigued by what she *doesn't* say, and it is this withheld emotional power, as much as the events of the plot, which compels you to read on' (2002, p. 35).

This 'indirection' is a quality that the film shares on one level. It also never explains anything: Morvern's feelings and motivations are only obliquely hinted at, in a very similar fashion but to a more extreme degree than those of James (William

Eadie) in *Ratcatcher*. At least in the latter film, however fleeting they are, we do receive some glimpses into his psychology: a shed tear here, an attempt to help Margaret-Anne (Leanne Mullan) recover her glasses there, etc. In *Morvern*, there are no such moments and if there are, they are much more inscrutable than those in Ramsay's previous films. This apparent analogue between film and novel notwithstanding, there is no extended alignment of camera with character, nor is there a voice-over track offering Morvern's point-of-view in the film. Though she is far from forthcoming about why she is doing what she's doing, the book's Morvern does tell us about her upbringing, her foster parents and her relationship with her boyfriend before his suicide, all of which is omitted from the film. It is a conscious choice on the part of the film-maker to not go into detail about Morvern's foster mother whilst still hinting at her existence with Morvern twice mentioning her death. Likewise is it the choice of the film-makers not to tell the audience that the people seen in the Oban pub are Morvern's foster father and his girlfriend, information which is then disclosed in the film's closing credits. If it is Warner's character Morvern that is being indirect in the novel, it is Ramsay that is being indirect in the film, and this shift in agency is very significant for how we understand authorship in relation to the film.

A related point is the extent to which the film eschews the narrative closure found in the novel. Warner's version of the story has a pregnant Morvern returning to Scotland after four years of raving in Spain to visit the grave of her foster mother and to find work now that her money has run out, leaving the narrative at a point at which *These Demented Lands*, Warner's sequel to the book, continues on from. The film on the other hand is much more ambiguous about Morvern's fate. The closing images of the film, which show Morvern striding through a rave listening to 'Say a Little Prayer' on her headphones, isolated from what is going on around her, are open to a

number of interpretations. One could assume that she has returned to the rave scene in Spain, as someone who knows the novel may think. Or the scene could be viewed as a flashback to earlier in the film just before her disgust with the youth club scene in Spain led her to flee the resort. Such a reading could then interpret this as the audience being given a retrospective turning point to explain Morvern's actions, leaving them to assume that after meeting with Lanna (Kathleen McDermott) in the film's penultimate scene she simply leaves Scotland for points unknown. Either of these versions or indeed any number of others can be claimed to be the 'real' ending, precisely because it has been set up that way by the film. This is in keeping with the endings found throughout Ramsay's oeuvre. We can recognize the purposefully ambiguous ending from the similarly unexplained possible suicide/possible deliverance from poverty in the denouement of *Ratcatcher* as well as the likewise open endings of all of the short films. How does Susie (Lynne Ramsay, Jr.) in *Gasman* (1998) live with the knowledge that her father has two illegitimate children? What ends does Bill's (James Ramsay) life of drug dependence and regret lead him to in *Kill the Day* (1997)? We don't know the answer to these questions, and Ramsay for her part in interviews tries to encourage ambiguity, saying of the ending of *Ratcatcher* for instance that she herself does not know what actually happens (*Ratcatcher* DVD Interview). This is in keeping with the narrative conventions of the classical art cinema as described by Bordwell, which amongst other things serve to emphasize the director's authority over the spectator (1986, p. 209). This is a textual strategy that is not unrelated to the film's industrial position. As Tom O'Regan notes about the work of Australian director Paul Cox, 'invit[ing] the labour of the auteurist', (i.e. making films that demand critical interpretation) has proven a viable way of helping to establish a director's credibility as an artist, especially in the field of festival-

orientated national cinema production, a credibility which can then enhance the prestige of the nation from which the film originates (1996, p. 64).

4.3: Putting the Ramsay Stamp on the Film: ‘Signatures’, Stylistic and Otherwise

As Bordwell notes about art cinema generally, a common strategy for branding a film as part of an auteur director’s oeuvre is to include in a film a number of ‘stylistic signatures’ and references to previous works by the director, clues that can be read by the ‘competent viewer’ as evidence of that director’s auteur status (2002, p. 97). Such strategies can be found in *Morvern Callar* as changes from book to film serve to remind the viewer that they are watching an auteur film, but also assert that this is specifically a Lynne Ramsay film. There are a number of these moments in the film that can be commented on in this regard. These include the moment when Morvern changes the name on the manuscript from her boyfriend’s name, James Gillespie, to her own; the scene in which Lanna and Morvern bathe together; and the scene in which Morvern buries her boyfriend’s body in the Highlands. In each of these moments, there is a Lynne Ramsay signature, by that I mean an intertextual reference strategically placed to remind those watching the film with the appropriate cultural capital to recognize the references of the fact that they are watching a film by the director of *Ratcatcher*.

The most explicit of these is the change made to the name of Morvern’s dead boyfriend. By giving the boyfriend the name James Gillespie (he goes unnamed in the book), Ramsay plants a small detail that will remind alert viewers that this film was made by the director of *Ratcatcher*, a film in which the protagonist is named James

Gillespie. That such nods to authorship in *Morvern Callar* can serve to ‘invite the labour of the auteurist’ is evidenced by a passage in *Contemporary Scottish Fictions*, wherein Petrie describes this specific detail as an intertextual link between the two films significant enough to allow him to base an argument for a thematic parallel between the two films (2004, p. 105). Similar things can be said about the bathing scene with Lanna and Morvern, which recalls the intimate bathing scene in *Ratcatcher*. Finally, the same is true of the atavistic celebration Morvern embarks on in the Highlands after burying her boyfriend’s corpse, which is markedly different from the mournful and suspenseful scene in the novel. Here the jump cuts, the usage of light and Morvern’s carefree playfulness all recall the style and content of James’s romp in the fields outside of the new housing estate in *Ratcatcher*. Such moments are not insignificant in and of themselves – in fact I would argue that the last two are very significant to the overall themes of the film – but they also signpost the fact that this is Ramsay’s personal vision we are seeing.

4.4: The Ramsay Persona and *Morvern Callar*

Ramsay’s assertions of authorship over *Morvern Callar* did not end when the film was completed, as much of the publicity for the film again took the form of the director interview/profile, and in this portion of the chapter I will give a brief account of the evolution of the Ramsay persona during this promotional effort. Much of Ramsay’s discourse regarding her second feature mirrors that said regarding her first, with the same inherent contradictions. What I would like to highlight here is one of the major differences, this being the growing concern with gender, a concern which helps to align the film with Ramsay personally. A piece in *The Daily Telegraph*

featuring Ramsay discussing *A Woman Under the Influence* (Donaldson, 2002) begins with the observation that Ramsay was the first woman consulted for the paper's 'Film-makers on Film' series. Her response to being informed of this is recorded by reporter Sarah Donaldson as such:

'In the beginning, I used to hate the whole categorisation thing', she says. 'Those "How does it feel to be a working-class female director with a wooden leg?" questions, which ask you to justify yourself for being in a minority. But recently, a documentary-maker told me that only two per cent of the world's professional directors are female. Shocking. But I do think that many of our new interesting directors are women, so maybe things are changing'. (2002, p. 12)

If things are indeed changing, this passage shows Ramsay acknowledging, however grudgingly, that she is part of what is going on and can, and should be, thought of as such.

One promotional piece in particular takes the gender angle to a rather extreme degree. Ramsay and Samantha Morton were profiled and interviewed together in the run-up to the release of *Morvern Callar* in a piece for *The Guardian* entitled 'About a Girl' (Leigh, 2002). Very early in the article, its author, Danny Leigh, notes that the press surrounding *Ratcatcher* focused on Ramsay's gender and upbringing, pointing out for instance that some writers made a lot out of the fact that (according to Ramsay, it should be noted) her school's careers officer advised her to become a secretary instead of going to art school, and dwelled on her father's intermittent unemployment and the fact that she came from one of the poorest sections of Glasgow (2002, p. 28). According to Leigh, 'The implication seemed to be that Ramsay's achievement was all the more impressive coming from a working-class woman from one of Britain's most deprived cities' (2002, p. 28). The piece goes on to note Ramsay's disdain for this type of publicity. 'Oh look, here's this little Scottish

woman' she says ironically at one point, and Leigh then quotes her as wondering if the media would have been as interested in her if she had grown up somewhere like Surrey (2002, p. 28). But later in the piece, Ramsay criticises the British film industry as being full of 'public schoolboys pretending to be geezers', and then the conversation shifts to a discussion of the inherent advantages of working with female directors, leading to the following passage:

[Samantha] Morton is suddenly reflective. 'When it comes to practicalities, some male directors can be incredibly cruel. Because, as a woman, there's certain things you can't hide. It's like...' She clamps her hand over her mouth. Ramsay and I peer at her. What? 'Oh, fuck it. I was doing that sex scene and I was on my period, and me and Lynne were both like, well, what are we going to do, because my Tampax string was showing. And in the end she just stopped the camera, leaned over and cut it off. And for all sorts of reasons, I can't imagine a man doing that.' (2002, p. 32)

With such a detailed story, we have gender very vividly impressed onto our understanding of *Morvern*, and not just because of the Tampax string. The passage's description of the interview itself in which Morton is portrayed as letting a secret, embarrassing story about the two women slip, lending the piece a feeling of eavesdropping on an intimate conversation between two women. Even though these words come from Morton and not Ramsay, the story nonetheless feeds into the feminine persona of the director: 'girl bonding' is evoked, as is Ramsay's femininity, both of which lead to the perception of enhanced directorial abilities on her part. Gender clearly is an issue for the Ramsay persona in the promotion of *Morvern Callar*, in spite of all the denials with which the piece opened, just as the jibes about Surrey and the public school boys reminds us that class and nationality are likewise invoked despite her previous attempts to distance herself from those categories.

4.5: *Morvern Callar* and Reception: Looking for Consistency

As was detailed above, Ramsay's authorial persona was firmly established at the time of the release of *Ratcatcher*, but we can observe some development of it in the reception of *Morvern Callar* where gender and nationality become more prominent. So it is that a review from *The Times* says of the film that 'It's here that Ramsay vindicates amply the sizzling promise of her 1999 feature debut, *Ratcatcher*' (Christopher, 2002, p. 12). Interestingly, given my previous discussion of Ramsay's adaptation of the book, this review in particular goes on to praise Ramsay's abilities as a director precisely in terms of her control over knowledge in the film: 'the director keeps the audience at teasing distance. There is no easy sentiment, and plenty of sharp truths. But Morvern herself remains an hypnotic riddle' (Christopher, 2002, p. 13). The comparison to other auteur film-makers continues in reviews from both sides of the ocean, with Claire Denis and Carl Theodor Dreyer being mentioned by a reviewer from *The Village Voice* (Peranson, 2002, p. 154), and the influence of Bill Douglas being noted by *The Daily Telegraph* (Sandhu, 2002, p. 25). All of these tendencies come together in Linda Ruth Williams's review of the film for *Sight and Sound*. Here Williams describes Ramsay as '[b]uilding on the promise of her award-winning feature debut' (2002, p. 23), praises 'Ramsay's poetic way with resonant images' (2002, p. 23) and goes on to make an extended comparison between the film and one by Michelangelo Antonioni, though she adds gender to the equation, saying 'Ramsay turns the whole Morvern story into a kind of remake of *The Passenger* [Michelangelo Antonioni, 1974] for girls' (2002, p. 24).

A very significant change in Ramsay's reception in the wake of *Morvern Callar* is that with two features now on release as well as the availability of Ramsay's

short films on DVDs of *Ratcatcher* some discussion of authorial oeuvre becomes possible. In a particularly telling review in terms of the consolidation of Ramsay's persona and the appraisal in terms of authorial consistency, American reviewer Roger Ebert wrote a highly positive review of the film and concluded it with a cursory overview of Ramsay's oeuvre, noting the dark themes that run through her short films and *Ratcatcher* (2002, p. 27), and implying that this consistency from film to film did indeed, to return to Grant's description of the cult of the auteur, make the film 'more valuable'. Ebert's usage of Ramsay's short films to establish the requisite consistency for bestowing the status of auteur on Ramsay shows that the distribution of *Ratcatcher* on DVD, in this case as part of the prestigious Criterion Collection in North America (which packaged Ramsay's short films together with an interview with Ramsay) had the effect of allowing viewers to verify her auteur status, helping to solidify Ramsay's persona.

Section 5: Conclusions

5.1: Policy and the Development of Ramsay

The realization that Ramsay's short films have become part of a system for verifying her claims to auteur status provides an opportune point at which to return to the role that policy has played in shaping her career. Long held to be spaces for filmmakers to learn their trade or to act as 'calling cards' introducing new directors to the wider film industry (Petrie, 2000b, pp. 160-162; McLoone, 2000, pp. 151-162), what is apparent from the case of Ramsay (and, I would argue, also for Peter Mullan) is that they are equally as important for 'developing' auteur persona. To appreciate this, we

can return to Bordwell's description of art cinema. Writing about the promotion and critical reception of art cinema, Bordwell notes the importance of auteur films being seen as chapters in a larger oeuvre (2002, p.97). With such a model in mind, we can see the DVD packaging of Ramsay's short films as helping to accelerate the perception of Ramsay as an auteur by providing critics with earlier 'chapters' with which to compare *Morvern Callar*. Similarly, we can see the Lottery application for *Morvern Callar* as being a clear case of exploitation of authorial persona, which is in turn mirrored by the promotion and critical reception of the film.

While there is no debating that policy generally has created the conditions for Ramsay as well as many others to begin making films, the relationship between the director and policy institutions was not as straightforward in the case of Lynne Ramsay as the narratives of discovery and nurturing of talent that are currently found in historiographies of Scottish cinema. Such narratives can be paralleled with accounts of other new cinema movements, especially what I, in the literature review portion of this thesis, argued is one of the most cited moments in European film history for the affirmative potential of policy interventions in the film industry, the new German cinema. Just as Elsaesser argued in the case of that movement and its critical reception, the relationship between policy and film-makers was far from that of the 'state supporting artists of genius' (1989, p. 3), and much the same can be said regarding Scottish Screen's support of indigenous film-makers. Instead of such institutions helping to create a film director, in the case of Lynne Ramsay a more appropriate description would be to say that they helped to create an auteur, and this difference is very significant, not least for Ramsay herself and the ways in which her career has progressed since the release of *Morvern Callar*.

It is important to remember at this point that though the rhetoric of the applicants relied on auteur discourses, it was not the case that Scottish Screen sought only to support ‘an artist of genius’ in the case of Lynne Ramsay and *Morvern Callar*. Though Scottish Screen and other Lottery bodies such as the UK Film Council have generally taken credit for both critical successes (which Ramsay’s films have undoubtedly been) and commercial successes (which the films have decidedly not been) the intention detected in the application itself was that of supporting a film that would do both. Here I would remind readers of the applicants’ descriptions of the film as being ‘exciting’, ‘original’ and ‘accessible’ and the implicit comparisons to *Trainspotting* described earlier in the chapter. These were promises that suggested the film would be able to ‘cross over’ to mainstream audiences while also attracting critical praise. Ramsay’s films have not, however, crossed over in any fashion. If this period in Scottish film history were one of Scottish film policy creating a protected enclave for art cinema production, then we wouldn’t have to account for Ramsay’s forced hiatus from film-making which followed *Morvern Callar*. It is to this hiatus and the issues that it raises for Scottish film policy and historiography that I now turn.

5.2: Ramsay’s Future: The Sustainability Question

In praising Ramsay’s unabashed embrace of art cinema conventions in the midst of a British film culture which has long been antipathetic to such a mode of film-making, *The Independent*’s Jonathan Romney makes a point that is very insightful for the way that Ramsay’s career has gone since *Morvern Callar*: ‘This [antipathy towards art film-making in Britain] shouldn’t make any difference to the brilliant young Scottish director Lynne Ramsay, *as long as she continues to get*

funding' (2002, p. 9; emphasis added). The economic fragility of Ramsay's way of making films was highlighted by the aborted production of *The Lovely Bones* shortly after the release of *Morvern Callar* which I mentioned at the outset of this chapter. While no one has yet given an explicit statement about why Ramsay was taken off the project, and why the project was given instead to *Lord of the Rings* director Peter Jackson, Ramsay herself has hinted that the unexpected runaway success of Alice Sebold's novel, on which the film is to be based, had the effect of raising producers' commercial expectations, expectations that were not felt to be appropriate for Ramsay given her stated intentions to adhere to the aesthetics and production practices of her previous films (Ramsay and Leigh, 2005; Schwartz, N.D.). Her public insistence that she would in this case 'stick to her guns' shows us that her persona as a visionary director persists and would not allow for public compromise thereof. In some senses, persona has outlasted the director, as she has continued to do things like writing pieces for *The Guardian* (Ramsay and Leigh, 2005) while continuing to work has proved more difficult.⁵⁸ Far from showing that Ramsay's films had helped to create a viable production base for art cinema production along the lines described by Murray and Blandford, the removal of Ramsay from *These Lovely Bones* demonstrates that being more commercial is a reality of the marketplace that Scottish film-makers must negotiate despite the emergence of indigenous funding structures. This is in keeping with global trends within the film industry and need not mean 'selling out'. To illustrate these points and to wrap up this chapter, we can look at the case of another female auteur director who has been more successful in coping with the realities of the contemporary film marketplace, that being New Zealand-born writer/director Jane Campion.

5.3: The ‘Successful’ Female Auteur Today: Jane Campion, Policy and the Realities of the Marketplace

In positing a useful comparison between Campion and Ramsay, I do not wish to suggest that they have similar styles or thematic concerns – indeed, far from it – nor do I wish to insinuate in any essentialist fashion that their femininity binds them, as some journalistic reviewers have done in the past (Romney, 1999; Taubin, 2000; Adams, 2001). It is instead their similar positions within the historiographies of their respective national cinemas as well as their positions within the economy of the international film industry that makes comparing their situations germane to this discussion. Like Ramsay, Campion has been seen as vindicating the policy structures of Australian cinema, the industry in which she began her career, by working her way up from publicly supported short films to subsidized feature film production and ultimately international success without betraying her emergent persona (O’Regan, 1996, p. 55; Polan, 2001, pp. 17-18). Also like Ramsay, Campion is described as offering a female perspective which counterpoints the masculine orientation of Australian culture and film production (Crofts, 1996, p. 730), and has had her nationality act as a key talking point in the promotion of her films (i.e. do the films she’s made in Australia belong to the canons of Australia’s or New Zealand’s national cinema?) (Polan, 2001, p. 18-19). Finally her persona formation has been such that academic analyses of her work were emerging before she had finished her first theatrically-released feature, *Sweetie* (1989) (Freiberg, 1987).⁵⁹

The major difference between the film-makers, however, has been Campion’s ability to successfully ‘cross-over’ to mainstream audiences, especially beginning with *The Piano* (1993) and afterwards, without losing artistic credibility. To do so,

Campion has used familiar American and British actors and drawn on popular genres such as melodrama (*The Piano. Portrait of a Lady* [1996]), comedy (*Holy Smoke* [1999]) and the slasher film (*In the Cut* [2003]), and even though she has not always been successful in reaching audiences or garnering critical acclaim, with *In the Cut* in particular failing on both fronts, she has been able to keep working and maintaining her auteur persona.

Campion has achieved this position by virtue of her work with 'cross-over' specialist distributor Miramax and by combining the generic characteristics described above with the distinctive sensibility shown in her early work (Polan, 2001, pp. 18-19), in effect making what can be loosely described as films that exist somewhere between the poles of popular and art cinema. It has helped in Campion's case that her major thematic concerns, which revolve around feminist politics, dovetail conveniently with her position as a female director, thus collapsing the distance between the authorial expectations thrust upon minority film-makers and the content of her films, something Ramsay began doing with *Morvern Callar* and looked set to do with *These Lovely Bones*.⁶⁰ Though it has given Ramsay and a number of others the start that they require and helped them to develop personae, policy has not changed the conditions of the marketplace and a 'cross-over' hit is what will in all likelihood be required to ensure a sustainable career for Lynne Ramsay.

As we will see, all of these issues related to authorship, nationality, institutions and marketplaces are also central to the career of David Mackenzie and to understanding his second feature film, *Young Adam*. It is to these two objects that I now turn for this thesis's final case study.

Chapter 6: The Author, the Producer and the Market: *Young Adam* and Scottish Cinema in the New Millennium

Section 1: Introduction

1.1: The ‘Moment’ of *Young Adam*: A Scottish ‘Event’ Film

By the time it was released in the UK in September 2003, *Young Adam* was already a high profile film. In the time leading up to its release, the film had been the subject of two major controversies on either side of the Atlantic. In Britain, Ewan McGregor, who played the lead role in the film, had been outspoken, particularly during press appearances at the Cannes Film Festival, in criticizing the UK Film Council for its reluctance to step in when one of the film’s backers pulled out just before shooting began, leaving a financial shortfall which threatened to derail the entire production. On the other side of the ocean, controversy arose when the MPAA gave the film an NC-17 rating – a rating which severely limited the amount of distribution the film would receive in the United States – because of the distributors’ (Sony Pictures Classics) refusal to cut a scene featuring male full frontal nudity. Besides censorship and subsidy controversies, a number of Scotland’s most famous actors were cast in the film and were heavily promoting it. These included McGregor, the actor most associated with the renaissance of film production in Scotland, as well as Peter Mullan, of *My Name is Joe* fame and recently making a name of himself as a director, and international arthouse star Tilda Swinton. The film was also presented as one that promised to recuperate the reputation of forgotten Scottish novelist Alexander Trocchi, all whilst launching the career of promising new Scottish director

David Mackenzie. The film enjoyed a mainly positive critical reception both at home and abroad and then swept the Scottish BAFTAs in 2004, confirming its status as one of the most talked about ‘event’ films that Scottish cinema had seen since *Trainspotting*.

Despite the generally high-profile that the film enjoyed, and indeed its relatively successful box office takings,⁶¹ *Young Adam* has not as of yet been the subject of any thoroughgoing analysis within Scottish cinema studies in the way that other contemporary Scottish films, such as *Orphans* or *The Magdalene Sisters* have been (Martin-Jones, 2005a; Murray, 2004), with two paragraphs in Blandford’s survey of post-devolutionary film and theatre (2007, p. 83) being the most extensive treatment the film has thus far received. In this chapter I will seek to closely examine the ‘moment’ of *Young Adam*, focusing on aspects of the film and its extra-textual life that continue the themes pursued throughout this thesis. These include national representation as well as the predicament of the Scottish film artist within the economy of the international marketplace, a marketplace in which subsidy bodies intervene. By placing it directly after my study of Lynne Ramsay and *Morvern Callar*, I hope to conclude the case study portion of the thesis with a juxtaposition of two of Scotland’s most interesting film-makers – as well as two of Scottish national cinema’s most interesting films – in order to offer a set of insights into Scottish cinema’s position twenty years after the establishment of indigenous funding structures in terms of the achievements described in histories of the ‘new Scottish cinema’. especially those designed to help indigenous artists bring their personal visions to the screen.

To begin this examination, I will begin with nationality itself. ‘Scottishness’ and ‘Britishness’ were crucial to the discourses surrounding *Young Adam* and were

also important to the film itself. Looking more closely at this will eventually lead us to the creative personnel involved in the film, some of whom were implicated in conveying the ‘nationality’ of the film. The opening section of the chapter will lead us to *Young Adam*’s two authors, novelist Alexander Trocchi and director David Mackenzie. The relationship between the literary and cinematic authors will be shown to be markedly different than that seen in the previous chapter between Ramsay and Warner and will bring us a larger meditation on the material conditions of authorship in the case of Mackenzie. This will bring us to Jeremy Thomas, the film’s producer, whom I will suggest to be the third figure who can be considered one of the film’s authors. As such, my analysis of *Young Adam* will be oriented towards illuminating a number of industrial, cultural and aesthetic issues that have surrounded film production in Scotland and Britain, a point which will bring us full circle to the issues raised in my opening study of *Local Hero*. Though it may seem on the surface an unlikely comparison, it will become apparent by the end of this chapter that *Young Adam* and *Local Hero* mirror one another in a number of important ways and this will set the stage for my closing overview of the thesis as a whole. But all of this begins with the aspect of the film that is arguably its most discussed aspect at nearly every stage of its production, promotion and reception, the importance of its national context.

Section 2: A Very Scottish Film

Being a film with national importance, whether it be for Scotland or Britain, is something that dominates every aspect of *Young Adam*, from its press kit – which amongst other things quotes Thomas himself saying ‘if you’re filming a book by a

Scot in Scotland there is no one more suitable than Ewan [McGregor]’ to play the lead character (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 2) – to its application for subsidy from Scottish Screen, in part by pointing out its ‘extremely strong Scottish credentials’ (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 7), to the publicity surrounding the film which made great usage of such ‘credentials’. Instead of exhaustively detailing every manifestation of this theme in the discourses surrounding the film, and indeed within the film itself, I will here concentrate my attention on a number of interrelated instances of its appearance, beginning with the controversies that surrounded its production. As the ways in which this controversy manifested itself in the press implicitly frame the film as nationally relevant, it is an important object for analysis here. I will then move on to how the film was presented as being Scottish to Scottish Screen, and then implicitly approved for funding on these terms. The manifestation of nationality in the context of policy in this case will be shown to be related to national representation in two senses: one having to do with the way in which the film itself represents Scotland/Britain, and the other with the involvement of Scottish artists, including actors, the director and the author of the novel on which the film is based.

2.1: Promoting *Young Adam* as a National Film: Policy Polemics

Accusations directed at the UK Film Council began with the film’s promotional press conference at Cannes in 2003. A report in the trade press tells of a heated argument between Alan Parker, then head of the Council, and Jeremy Thomas after McGregor and Swinton dedicated part of the post-screening press conference to attacking the Council’s decision not to intercede when the project faced the aforementioned shortfall (Minns, 2003, p. 10). This was just the beginning, however,

as McGregor in particular continued to use publicity interviews for the film to criticize the Council, accusing the body of favouring crass financial concerns and general philistinism when it came to ‘important’ works such as *Young Adam*. In some cases these attacks even became the main story related to the film, as seen in such headlines as: ‘McGregor Rages at Film Fund’s Agenda’ (Gibbons, 2003, p. 7) and ‘McGregor in Attack on “Betrayal” of British Films’ (Alberge, 2003, p. 11). The attacks found in these articles typically feature critiques of the kind of cinema that the Council supposedly favoured combined with claims that because of such policies, the body wasn’t acting in the *national* interest. *Young Adam* is an important film for Scotland and Britain, according to McGregor, precisely because it was not an easily marketable film. Such a position can be seen in a piece in *The Guardian*, in which the case of *Young Adam* is considered alongside that of the Hanif Kureishi-scripted film *The Mother* (Roger Michell, 2003), which also featured provocative sexual content and faced similar difficulties getting funding, as springboards for inquiry into the values of the British film-making establishment: ‘Their triumph [that of *Young Adam* and *The Mother*] will reignite the debate on whether Alan Parker’s Film Council is too ready to spend its pot of lottery money on middle-brow, commercial projects rather than daring scripts’ (Gibbons, 2003, p. 7). The writer of the piece, Flachra Gibbons, then goes on to quote McGregor as saying:

‘Had I gone to them [the Council] with a romantic comedy there would have been no problem. [...] We went to all the British film funding people and they all said no. We used to have a reputation of being able to do anything in British film. And I was lucky to be involved in two films that opened the door to that, *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*. But the door has slowly closed behind us’. (2003, p. 7)

The positioning of the film by McGregor is one in which the film is the opposite of implicitly less substantial genre production and the equal of the films that launched McGregor's career. His rhetoric, as well as Swinton's, continually reiterated the view that the film was 'national', with consistent reiteration of the mantra that *Young Adam* was an example of film-making that offered 'British films for British people' (Macnab, 2003b, p. 10; see also the making of featurette where he again compares the film to *Trainspotting* and *Shallow Grave*), and Swinton remarking on several different occasions that the film was distinctly Scottish as opposed to British or American (e.g. Macleod, 2004; Mathieson, 2005).

Besides qualities pertaining to artistic complexity and national address and importance, there are also claims of authenticity made in these polemics, authenticity which is presented as being at risk under the money-conscious regime at the Council. A piece in *The Times* features an allegation made by McGregor that the Council suggested that the makers of *Young Adam* lower their production costs by filming outside of Britain, a suggestion that McGregor claims the makers disregarded on specifically national grounds: 'We were really upset. We were short of money, but we felt strongly that it should be made in Britain' and goes on to criticize the same body for being more forthcoming with support for a film shot entirely in France (*Chemins de Traverse* [Manuel Poirier, 2004]) (Alberge, 2003, p. 11). Characterizing the film in such a way plays on two interrelated national sympathies. One of these is that British institutions should support British films and thereby support local industry, with the French comparison perhaps playing on traditional Anglo-Gallic hostility as well as the fear that links to Europe are damaging the economy of the UK. The second important play on national sympathies has to do with the relationship between locality and nationality, as these comments rely on assurance that the film

was in fact shot in the area that it claims to represent; in effect promising indexical authenticity, an authenticity that would have been lacking had it been shot in Eastern Europe or some other location even whilst ostensibly being set in Scotland. Though there is some doubt over how well McGregor's comments in these interviews reflect the reality of the difficulties faced by the film-makers,⁶² what is interesting for our present purposes is how this rhetoric about the cultural responsibility of funding bodies acted as a source of promotional discourses for the film, discourses which framed the film in very specific terms relating to national importance, difficulty, complexity, originality and authenticity.

2.2: A Film With 'Extremely Strong Scottish Credentials': Scottishness in the Funding of *Young Adam*

The attempts to frame *Young Adam* as a national film can also be seen in the application for production subsidy from Scottish Screen. The 'Meeting the Criteria' section of the Scottish Screen funding application for *Young Adam* begins with the following question: 'How many people will benefit from the project and in what ways will they benefit?' (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 7). In their response, the applicants list various forms of economic and cultural impact, including local spend and employment as well as a number of claims for the national relevance of the film for Scotland – or, to use the applicants' own language: 'an important cultural impact for Scotland' (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 7). This in and of itself is not surprising considering that the applicants were seeking funding from a Scottish cultural organization, but it is nonetheless interesting to look at just how they articulate that

relevance: ‘The nature of the screenplay and [the film’s] extremely strong Scottish credentials should raise the interest and curiosity of the audience and might have a possible effect on tourism’ (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 7). And later, in response to an even more pointed question (“How is your project culturally relevant to Scotland?”): ‘The film is based in Scotland, it will be shot in Scotland and the writer of the underlying novel, the screenwriter, the director and the lead actor are Scottish’ (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 7). While it is not explicitly stated here, it is not too much of a stretch to say that the latter response can be said to explain the first, effectively laying out the film’s ‘Scottish credentials’. These are responses which contain a number of promises and it is worth looking at their contents in relation to the film itself in greater detail, beginning with the assertion as to national representation, which is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly it implies that national representation will be one of the film’s attractions and that the nation will be a significant enough aspect of the film’s mise-en-scène that it will arouse ‘interest and curiosity’ regarding the nation in audiences. Secondly, the application rhetoric implies that the nationality of its personnel will be another set of attractions, strengthening its projection of ‘Scottishness’.

2.3: National Representation in *Young Adam* I: Clydeside, and Kitchen Sink Noir

Given such promises, in this section of the chapter I will look more closely at national representation in the film. Is *Young Adam* somehow ‘about’ Scotland? Is the nation itself presented in a particularly exotic or interesting manner? To begin answering these questions, we must remember that it is a film with a historical setting.

in this case Scotland in the 1950s, and that this raises issues of historical representation that require sorting out before moving on to analyse the film's national representational tendencies proper.

In its attempts to recreate the period being represented, the film can be usefully compared to films such as *Far From Heaven* (Todd Haynes, 2003) or *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Bob Rafelson, 1981), which base their depiction of the period being represented on films from that time, while also interpreting and commenting on that period by means of critical discrepancies from the conventions of the films being imitated.⁶³ This is not without precedent in British cinema. Writing about British films from the 1980s which seek to represent the 1950s, John Hill draws upon Fredric Jameson's notion of 'nostalgia for the present' as it relates to depictions of the decade. Hill argues that a number of British films from the 1980s follow a pattern of 'remembering' the decade in mediated terms, in essence presenting not an attempt at a realistic view of what the 1950s looked like but instead simulating what the 1950s have come to look like in films made in the 1950s and drawing on the genres that are most associated with that period (1999, p. 124). Writing specifically about *Dance with a Stranger* (Mike Newell, 1985), Hill argues that the film uses the aesthetic and narrative conventions of film noir and the women's film to re-present the post-war period (1999, p. 128). The film's themes also revolve around taking a critical view towards the 1950s as a period of sexual repression and social hypocrisy as well as rigid class and gender divides (1999, p. 125). Very similar things can be said of the representational tendencies of *Young Adam* with a nationally specific wrinkle. The film draws on the stylistic and generic conventions of noir, but with its concern for the Glaswegian working-class male milieu of the 1950s, the film also

draws on the 'angry young man' film of the British new wave, while also recalling the Scottish representational tradition of Clydesidism.

Noirish aspects of the film can be seen operating in *Young Adam* from just a cursory overview of its plot: Joe (Ewan McGregor), a handsome young drifter with a loose code of ethics comes between an unhappy housewife, Ella (Tilda Swinton), and her deeply flawed husband, Les (Peter Mullan). The drifter and the unhappy wife carry on a passionate and dangerous affair under the nose of the husband, and it is gradually revealed that the drifter is involved in the death of a woman who was his lover, only to see the wrong man executed for the crime. Along the way the wife's marriage is put at risk only to be repaired in the end after the drifter is out of the picture. All this plot needs is a deliberate murder or two to be nearly identical to that of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, the ur-noir story that has been adapted numerous times, including once in Italy (*Ossessione* [Luchino Visconti, 1943]) and twice in Hollywood in 1946 (Tay Gannett) and 1981 (Bob Rafelson). Both stories feature transgressive sexual encounters with the spectre of death and destruction paralleling the moral transgressions of their respective protagonists, with *Young Adam*'s montage structure counterpointing memories of Joe's affair with Cathie (Emily Mortimer), the woman who ends up dead, with his affair with Ella.

Going beyond theme and narrative arc, elements of the film such as lighting and the use of colour in *Young Adam* also recall film noir. One could point to a number of instances of the expressive use of shadow and chiaroscuro in the film, such as one of the many shots of Joe smoking in his darkened bunk, or barely lit faces peering through the walls of the barge to watch the various couplings taking place in Ella's bunk, or the dark blue hues lighting Joe and Cathy's encounter under a pier-side lorry which precedes her drowning, as notable instances of this influence. To

these we could add other well-known noir mainstays such as the existential worldview of its main character Joe, the general feeling of physical claustrophobia on the barge and in the crowded Glasgow pubs and tenements that Joe exists in, which matches Joe's feelings of entrapment first by Cathy and later by Ella when both women suggest marriage to him.

There are also significant differences between the film and classical noir. To begin with, we actually see the sex between characters, something that did not occur in the original films, a discrepancy commonly found in neo-noir films (Dyer, 2007, p. 124). Also when comparing Swinton's Ella, who is seen scratching her armpits and talking with her mouth full at various points during her affair with Joe, to the glamorous femme fatale characters of the original noir films, we can see another sharp difference between the film and noir. Likewise can Joe's lack of charm and seductive power in the film be compared to other noir heroes. As opposed to someone like Walter Neff (Fred McMurray) in *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944) who seduces (or at least thinks he seduces) Phyllis (Barbara Stanwyck) with his witty and sexually-charged flirtatious banter, Joe simply thrusts himself upon the women in the film. He says only a few words before taking Cathie behind a rock to have sex when they first meet. His courtship of Ella consists of thrusting his leg and hand against her leg at dinner one day. He only needs to wait for Gwen to finish her drink before the two have a decidedly non-erotic encounter out in the alley next to the pub, one which concludes with Gwen saying 'Look at the mess you made of me', and then picking up her still burning cigarette from the ground. The graphic detail of the sex throughout the film – including the shot of McGregor's penis that caused the film difficulties with American censors – as well as the banality of the characters are differences from classical noir which signpost the film's attempts to reinterpret the 1950s. It wasn't.

according to the film, a period of high moral standards or particularly beautiful or noble people. But the historical re-presentation and reinterpretation does not end with noir, it also takes on two other, more nationally specific filmic traditions, those to do with the so-called angry young man of the British new wave tradition and the less well-known representational tradition of Clydesidism.

The figure of the 'angry young man', lifted from British literature and cinema of the late 1950s and early 1960s, can be seen as an intertext for the film's Joe. Hill describes this figure as being born out of the disaffection of the male working-class in post-war Britain as the economy moved from a manufacturing base to a service-oriented one. When this occurred, the male breadwinner was threatened with a loss of his traditional occupations in heavy industrial labour. Further frustrating traditional masculinity in this period was the increasing prominence of the woman in the workplace as she began to act as the primary provider for many working-class families. The anger that all these changes occasioned was outwardly directed at the hypocrisies of British society, which promulgated a myth of a new prosperity and egalitarianism, but it was also directed at the newly economically-empowered working-class woman (1986, pp. 20-27). This figure has one of its most famous cinematic incarnations in Richard Burton's Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* (Tony Richardson, 1958). For all of the political content of the film, Hill points out that at root, *Look Back in Anger* spends most of its time showcasing the virulent misogyny of Jimmy (1986, p. 25).

Young Adam's Joe, whose story is set at approximately this time period, is suffering from a similar crisis of masculinity. After the departure of Les from the barge (who, significantly, leaves because Ella owns the vessel), Joe's relationship with Ella becomes increasingly characterized as one of economic dependence. When

Les comes to talk to Ella, she snaps at Joe saying 'You got work to do', lording her position as his boss over him. Any romance there may be imagined to exist between the two is undercut when the film at one point jumps from the two beginning to make love to Ella paying Joe his wages. Joe is likewise economically beholden to Cathie during their affair and is also very resentful of this situation. His anger and resentment manifest themselves in the custard scene, in which the materials of domestic labour (food stuffs and cooking utensils) become the instruments of misogynist assault and degradation. The critical discrepancy, the act of interpretation on the part of the film of the 'angry young man' figure shows him to violent and morally debased and not at all as heroic and romanticized as he was in the films of the British new wave.

The final representational context that can be usefully applied to the film is one that is specifically Scottish. Writing of Scottish-set films from the 1940s and 1950s such as *The Brave Don't Cry* and *Floodtide* (Frederick Wilson, 1949), Colin McArthur described Clydesidism as a discourse that placed emphasis on the spectacle of working-class masculinity, thematically emphasizing community and unity amongst the working-classes and portraying the Clyde as the centre of working-class life (1982b, pp. 52-54). Taken together these are tendencies that the film both employs and subverts in equal measure. The film's narrative is punctuated by moments of banal observation of men at work. These include Les and Joe shovelling coal, loading and unloading the barge, manoeuvring the barge down the Clyde, and, in one of the film's most memorable scenes, washing coal soot off one another. Besides just showing the men engaging in traditionally masculine pursuits, these spectacles, especially the final one, are imbued with a sense of community between the two workers, one that the audience knows from very early in the film is a false one. To return to national representation, the milieu of Clydeside Scotland (including the

dockyards and shipyards that were still active at the time, the pointedly squalid pubs and flats of the urban working-classes of the period, the canals and quiet rural stretch of land between Edinburgh and Glasgow) are what we see of Scotland in the film. In keeping with the film's bleak and nihilistic tone, these spaces are invested with a feeling of gloom and decay, a view of the nation that brings us back to other suggestions made by the applicants in their response to the question of 'public benefit'.

2.4: National Representation in *Young Adam* II: Tourist Scotland?

If we agree that the film gives a particularly vivid representation of Scotland and thereby could have sparked audience interest in the nation, a whole other set of questions can be asked regarding the outcome of such interest once it has been created. In the passage cited above, the applicants suggest one possible outcome: tourism. On the face of it this would seem to be a nonsensical claim, given the bleak worldview that *Young Adam* presents.⁶⁴ Yet this textual quality is not necessarily an indication of how the film might have been received. Anecdotally, one does hear of such unlikely things as *Trainspotting* tours of Edinburgh and favela tours of Rio de Janeiro inspired by *City of God* (Fernando Meirelles, 2002) (e.g. Glover, 1997; Lloyd, 2005). The phenomenon of film-related tourism is not adequately understood, even if a number of assumptions about it exist and circulate in film studies. It would be just as likely that the film could have inspired interest in historical tours of the parts of Glasgow where Joe is meant to have lived or boat trips on the stretches of the Clyde between Glasgow and Edinburgh that the barge traverses in the film, as it would have

been that the film discouraged people from visiting the region by showing it in such apparently unfavourable terms.

While there is perhaps something to the fact that tourism may have been perceived by the applicants as something that would encourage the Lottery Panel to smile upon their application, for our current purposes we should look at a little more closely at the film in relation to tourism. Is there evidence of the film being received in such a manner? There is nothing in the journalistic reception of the film to compare to the previously mentioned travel pieces on *Trainspotting* and *City of God*, and no evidence of the sort of Tourist Board marketing campaigns that came in the wake of films like *Local Hero* or *Braveheart*. What mentions of tourism that can be found in the reception of the film are concerned with presenting the film as the opposite of a tourist view of Scotland. Such mentions implicitly present being anti-tourist as something which confirms the authenticity of the film. Describing Trocchi's novel, the tone and worldview of which were largely replicated in the film, in a piece for *The Independent*, *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh calls it 'a breath of fresh air after all those horrible, sickly celebrations of Scottishness' that supposedly punctuated Scottish literature up to the time of *Young Adam*'s writing (Macnab, 2003a). Jonathan Romney takes this sentiment and applies it to the film itself saying, 'Suffice it to say, Mackenzie's dirty, damp, bone-chilling film is no tourist board advert for lochs and glens' (2003, p. 9). Stepping away from the reviews and commentaries on the film which explicitly mention tourism, those which discuss the presentation of Scotland at all do not do so in a manner that suggests the film would be amenable to tourist exposition. One reviewer described the film's version of Scotland as that of a 'soot-caked world' that 'has a grim, gray drabness to it' (Axmaker, 2004). Another, this one writing for *The Independent*, says of Mackenzie,

He goes out of his way to show how dour 1950s Scotland was. The colours are desaturated, as if the sun never shines. Whenever we see Ella, she's either peeling potatoes or making tea. The pubs where Leslie and Joe go to play darts are as dark and gloomy as churches. There's never enough hot water. (In one poignant scene, we see McGregor and Mullan scrubbing each other's coal-grimed backs.) (MacNab, 2003b)

None of these comments, however, should be interpreted as indications that the filmmakers missed the mark with their pledge to present the nation in ways that are interesting and exotic to audiences; after all, these comments demonstrate that local representation was indeed one of the more notable aspects of the film.

2.5: The 'Scottishness' of *Young Adam*: Promotion, Reception and Creative Personnel

As intimated above in my account of McGregor's criticism of the Film Council, as well as my description of the film as a Scottish 'event' film, nationality and national importance was an important part of the promotion of *Young Adam*. In promoting the film, much was made of some of the same 'strong Scottish credentials' that were used in the funding application, especially stars and authors. As we saw above, McGregor's rhetorical authority in criticizing the Film Council was based in part on his participation in the making of *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*, and he is cited by Thomas as the quintessential Scottish actor. Equally prominent during the promotion of the film was the nationality of Tilda Swinton, who defended the film as a specifically Scottish one (as opposed to British), and who used interviews to argue for the Europeanness of Scottish cinema and art in comparison to what she describes as commercialized British cinema, implicitly drawing on her caché as an art cinema

actress for directors such as Derek Jarman and Sally Potter (e.g. Pearce, 2003; Michael, 2003). Likewise were there numerous newspaper pieces on Alexander Trocchi, the by-now obscure Scottish author whom the film was ostensibly bringing back into the fold of Scottish arts and culture (e.g. Burnside, 2002; Cumming, 2003; Christopher, 2003). Amongst all of these figures, it is that of director David Mackenzie who is the most important for the concerns of this thesis. At the time of the film's release he was the least known figure amongst those involved in the project. Discursively speaking he is also the least represented in the promotion of the film, with the number of interviews featuring him (5) outnumbered by those featuring Swinton (6), McGregor (6), and those profiling Trocchi (6). Unlike Ramsay, who has been omnipresent in the promotion of her films, Mackenzie became a somewhat marginal figure in the promotion of *Young Adam* and further, when he did speak, he was almost always deferential to Trocchi. Given this thesis's concern with artists enabled by policy, it is to the role of Mackenzie in the funding and making of *Young Adam* that I now turn.

Section 3: Authorship, Adaptation and Art Cinema in *Young Adam*

3.1: Authorship in the Funding and Promotion of *Young Adam*

The somewhat marginal status Mackenzie has in the promotion of the film stands in stark contrast to his discursive presence in the application for funding from Scottish Screen. Throughout the application Mackenzie occupies a prominent place in comparison to those held by the film's stars or by Trocchi. When asked 'Why do you consider this project to be of high artistic quality', the applicants list Mackenzie's

‘great talent’ and ‘award winning short films’ before the project’s ‘Internationally renowned actors’ (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 9). The only part of the project mentioned before Mackenzie in this response is the film’s source novel which is described (somewhat dubiously) as ‘acclaimed’ (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 8). The subsequent question in the artistic quality subsection goes further in placing Mackenzie ahead of his collaborators. Question thirty-six on the application asks ‘Why do you consider the creative team is appropriate to this project?’, and is answered by the applicants with reference to only one member of that team:

David Mackenzie, the writer of the screenplay and the director, has worked on this project for many years. We are very impressed with his vision for the project. His award-winning short films give rise to great expectations for his feature-film debut. (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 9)⁶⁵

The rhetoric in this passage is predicated explicitly on auteurist grounds, referencing Mackenzie’s personal vision, his implicitly longstanding devotion to getting the film made, his previous work and the prestigious awards it has received.

These mentions of Mackenzie’s authorial vision for the project each seem to be calling on the portion of Scottish Screen’s mandate that requires it to assist in the development of Scottish talent. This is something that is even more apparent in the applicants’ response to a later question ‘Why can you not make your film with money from other sources?’: ‘Even though we view this project as a highly commercial proposition, David Mackenzie is a first time director and distributors are cautious in such cases. It is therefore necessary to source additional funding’ (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 10). Without presenting the film as a potentially uncommercial project, the applicants do all they can here to call on the market correction mandate of Scottish

Screen to intervene and ensure an unestablished Scottish artist is able to bring his vision to the screen.

That this was a successful strategy for the applicants to deploy can be seen from the decision made by the Lottery Panel. The minutes which record the Panel's decision in favour of *Young Adam*'s application as well as the reasons for doing so, in whole, read as follows:

A strong package: writer/director is David MacKenzie [sic] (*The Last Great Wilderness*), actors Ewan McGregor and Tilda Swinton. Very visual script but the Panel raised concerns indicating further development work was required to enhance the thriller content. It was thought that flashbacks could be moved around and the murderer's identity should be only given away nearer the end. It was noted that the film would appeal to a European Audience [sic]. On a whole the Panel were very supportive of this project and approved funds. (Scottish Screen, 2001b)

We can see that David Mackenzie qua auteur is a significant component of the Panel's discourse here, with his name and previous work being mentioned before stars Ewan McGregor and Tilda Swinton. We can also see a symmetry of sorts between the applicants' language in praising Mackenzie's 'vision' for the project, and the Panel's praise for the film's 'very visual script'. Though vision is used in different senses in each of the respective passages, in both cases it implies that the film will be auteur driven. Also interesting in this regard is the reference to 'a European Audience'. This seems to be another way of saying that this film will be an art cinema product as 'Europe' in common film parlance is somewhat stereotypically equated with highbrow art cinema, a conception that, as we have seen already, crops up elsewhere in the promotion and reception of the film.

Given the amount of attention in the film's publicity campaign devoted to its stars and to Trocchi himself, can we really say that this was promoted or perceived as

Mackenzie's film? Calling *Young Adam* an auteur film in terms of Mackenzie's presence dominating the film's publicity, which was the case with Lynne Ramsay's films, would be misleading, though there are mentions of Mackenzie's authorship and vision for the project. However, these mentions are almost always related to Trocchi's novel and Mackenzie's admiration thereof. For a number of reasons to do with national culture and the international film industry, the relationship between the authors is one of the most important aspects of the film, and it is worth examining in some detail.

3.2: Adapting Trocchi I: The Auteur as Intermediary

In a situation that contrasts sharply with the relationship between Lynne Ramsay and Alan Warner, Mackenzie is almost always deferential to Trocchi when he discusses the film. Asked in an interview whether or not he was acting as a director-for-hire on the film, Mackenzie gives a response that is typical of his statements during the promotion of the film: 'No, it was a passion of mine. I read Alexander Trocchi's book about nine years ago and it's taken me that long to get it off the ground' (Bear, 2004). Such avowed devotion and subservience runs throughout Mackenzie's other comments on the film. Introducing the DVD's commentary track, Mackenzie says that the idea for the film was born out of his fascination with Trocchi's book, and particularly with the character of Joe. This quickly becomes more than just an interesting bit of trivia and instead introduces a concern with the faithfulness of Mackenzie's script, which subsequently becomes one of the commentary track's main themes. As one of the 'talking heads' on the commentary track, Swinton explicitly grounds the theme of the fidelity of the adaptation in an

auteurist discourse, immediately praising Mackenzie's script for realizing Trocchi's 'cinematic' novel, and then later saying that it was the script that made her want to 'do anything to help [Mackenzie] make this film'. The theme of fidelity returns again and again throughout the commentary track as the various personnel involved in the track (Mackenzie, Swinton, the production designer Laurence Dorman and the editor Colin Monie) point out how various otherwise curious aspects of the film are included because they are in the novel. The 'faithful' aspects include extremely minute details, such as the number of cigarette stubs (nine) seen momentarily on screen in an ashtray in Gwen's apartment. Faithfulness to Trocchi's novel subsequently features prominently in the press kit for the film (the opening sentence of the pack describes the film as 'a beautiful and faithful adaptation' of Trocchi's book [Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 1]), is mentioned in nearly every review of the film and is added as a term of praise in Blandford's account of the film (2007, p. 83). The image that is sought to be presented is that of one artist channelling another, bringing to the screen the work of someone who has had a personal impact on Mackenzie as faithfully as possible. Important for its auteur director is the obscurity of that inspirational artist, as it is the revealing of Trocchi that is presented as Mackenzie's triumph in both the promotional discourses surrounding the film and in Blandford's treatment of the film (2007, p. 83). It is thus worth looking more closely at the status of Trocchi before and after the film's release in some more detail.

3.3: Adapting Trocchi II: The Auteur as Scholar

Mentions of Trocchi and his work in the press surrounding *Young Adam* are conflicting in their accounts of his legacy, with some referring to him as a ‘countercultural hero’ (Hodgkinson, 2002), and others describing him as ‘virtually forgotten by the time of his death’ (Cumming, 2003), with one particularly unkind commentator calling Trocchi ‘little more than a footnote in the history of the Beat Generation’ and stating that despite the publicity generated by the re-publication of his works in the early 1990s and the production of the film ‘his name still means little of nothing outside of the world of the counter-culture anorak’ (Burnside, 2002). While Anna Burnside’s comments overstate the case somewhat (there had been a retrospective of Trocchi’s life and work, *A Life in Pieces* [Campbell and Niel, 1997], published in 1997 and reviewed in *The Sunday Times* [Horovitz, 1997] and other mainstream publications) obscure was nonetheless the right word to describe Trocchi in 2003. His name is not to be found in mainstream anthologies and textbooks on the literature of the Beat movement, and what was written about him before the film was released tends to dwell on his wasted potential and life spent in obscurity.

In such a context, Mackenzie’s continual praise for Trocchi becomes an instance of the director acting as someone with specialized knowledge who brings a forgotten figure to the attention of a larger national and international culture. One of the central promotional strategies for the film revolved around sparking public interest and curiosity about the figure of Trocchi and his place in Scottish literature. Hence, the film’s press packet includes a section entitled ‘The Life and Work of Alexander Trocchi’ (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, pp.5-7), an explanatory section that would not be thought necessary for a well-known author. Likewise, it is significant that a large portion of the film’s ‘making of’ featurette is devoted to explicating the life and work of Trocchi. It is in such materials, in which Mackenzie is one of the

‘experts’ on the novel and its writer. that we can see Mackenzie himself promoted by virtue of his knowledge of a writer that is unknown to most audiences.

I will return later to how these discourses regarding Trocchi create a specific market niche for the film, but for now I would like to look at bit more closely at Mackenzie’s adaptation of the novel. Though in many ways the film is indeed ‘faithful’ to the book in terms of presenting the story found therein, there are nevertheless a number of differences between the two texts that are worth looking at more closely. Besides simply correcting the widespread belief that the film was a slavishly faithful recreation of the novel, my analysis here will also show how, as was the case with Ramsay and *Morvern Callar*, these changes help to re-brand the film as Mackenzie’s by both aligning it more with art cinema conventions but also by adding scenes which serve to personalize the film for Mackenzie.

3.4: Art Cinema in *Young Adam* I: Text and Adaptation

As was the case with *Morvern Callar*, one of the major changes that occurred during the adaptation process was the removal of the novel’s first person narration. The decision to drop this device changes not only the way in which the film’s story is told, but also how we understand the main character, Joe. From the outset of the novel, Joe hints that he knows more about the body than he is telling the reader. After he mentions an inappropriate thought he had about the corpse, Joe teases the reader by saying, ‘Later you will see what I mean’ (Trocchi, 1983, p. 9). Though there are flashbacks in the novel, the first-person narration does not slip into stream-of-consciousness, meaning that the flashbacks are clearly marked as such. This is in

sharp contrast to the film, in which it only becomes apparent that the flashbacks were flashbacks late in the film. The novel's Joe will typically say something like 'There was a time I suppose when we were happy' before launching into his memories of Cathie (Trocchi, 1983, p. 134). The first mention of Cathie in the novel not only makes clear that she is outside of the present tense of the narration, but also goes on to spell out most of the shared history between Joe and Cathie.⁶⁶ On the possibility of the body being Cathie's, the book is likewise more explicit than the film is. Early in the narrative, before his second encounter with Ella, Joe addresses the reader directly, saying:

Go back to the beginning.

It's an odd thing, or rather it *was* an odd thing. Thank God it's not likely to happen again.

I wanted to talk about Ella, about how she suddenly came to me, like a brainwave, on the very day we dragged the dead woman from the river. For that reason, and not to complicate the issue, I said nothing about Cathie. At least I didn't show where she fitted into the picture. She was there all the time of course, but you didn't know it. She was the corpse. (Trocchi, 1983, p. 82)

Not only does Trocchi here make it clear that the scene that follows will be a flashback, but with the first line also makes the reader understand exactly what point in the story's diegetic time Joe is speaking about. There is no ambiguity about when the flashbacks refer to, as there is in the film. Cathie's relationship to the other plots in the book is likewise overtly spelled out by Trocchi. There is no ambiguity as to whether or not she is the corpse that was found at the beginning of the book or that finding the body was linked to Joe beginning his affair with Ella.

In contrast, the film's flashbacks are not clearly signalled at all and it is only gradually that the actual timeline of events in the film becomes apparent. Bordwell describes a convention of classical art cinema which is apropos of the film's structure:

‘One common strategy is to use flashbacks in ways that only gradually reveal a prior event so as to tantalize the viewer with reminders of his or her limited knowledge’ (1986, p. 210). As fitting of a description as it is for the film’s usage of flashbacks, this is only a partial description of the film’s narrative design. *Young Adam* combines the reliance on flashback for conveying narrative information and the slow revelation of narrative details with an additional obfuscating tendency to not clearly demarcate the flashbacks as such, leaving the audience unaware that many of the scenes they are seeing do not take place in the film’s present tense, as it were. Conventional as it may be to the art cinema, what does this do to the film? It does make the film more complex and puzzling than it would have been if it had featured a standard, linear narrative, but does it do anything more than making the film more a puzzle that the audience derives pleasure from intellectually reassembling? As Bordwell implies in a passage cited earlier on flashbacks and slowly revealing a story, tantalizing the audience with the details of a story is very much a power game, one which demonstrates the film-maker’s authority over the audience, asserting Mackenzie as the agent controlling the audience’s knowledge of the events of the film’s story.

But the changes in narration also affect how Joe is understood. Comparing the film’s Joe to that of Trocchi’s novel helps us to appreciate the extent to which the former is more outwardly likeable. By doing such things as dropping the highly unpleasant first-person narration of events that is found in the novel, Mackenzie creates a Joe Taylor that is, almost by default, more appealing than his literary counterpart. But there are also changes to the events of the story which, when considered alongside the change in narrative perspective, create a distinctly more palatable Joe. One such change comes when Mackenzie adds a scene in which Joe heroically leaps into the Clyde to rescue James, Ella and Les’s son, when he is

accidentally pulled overboard. Besides increasing the ambiguity of Joe's character, making him more sympathetic than his counterpart in the novel, this addition also personalizes the film vis-à-vis Mackenzie himself. As he notes in the film's DVD commentary as well as promotional interviews, Mackenzie based this scene on an accident he had as a child (Bear, 2004).

Another example of the cleaning up of Trocchi's novel and especially Joe himself is the film's 'custard scene', which for all of its build-up in the press is considerably less disturbing than its counterpart in the novel. This can be seen from looking at the novel's version of the scene:

I grasped her by one arm, twisted her about so her great big and now custard smeared buttocks were facing me and with all the strength of my right arm I thrashed at them with the rough slat of wood. I thrashed her mercilessly for about a minute. She was making shrill whinnying noises as she thrashed about on the dusty floor...She was seated on her haunches, crying, wheezing and shaking. I emptied the bottle [of ink] over her head...I don't know whether she was crying or laughing as I poured a two-pound bag of sugar over her head. Her whole near-naked body was twitching convulsively, a blue breast and yellow-and-red one, a green belly, and all the odour of her pain and sweat and gnashing. By that time I was hard. I stripped off my clothes, grasped the slat of the egg crate, and moved among her with prick and stick, like a tycoon.
(Trocchi, 1983, p. 137)

As much as McGregor's casting is against type in the film, it is impossible to imagine his version of Joe speaking (or even thinking) like the narrator in this passage.

Whereas the book presented Joe as an outright repulsive character, the film does not do so and instead chooses ambiguity, making Joe into an enigma rather than an anti-hero. The changes from book to film, including these changes to narrative, character and tone, as well as the open-endedness of the film's ending, all serve to make the film more conventional in terms of traditionally conceived art cinema.

3.5: Art Cinema in *Young Adam* II: Institutional and Reception Contexts

In describing the changes made in adapting the film from Trocchi's novel as ones oriented towards making the film into more of an art film than a stricter adaptation of the novel would have been, I am characterizing the film as the sort of personal, complex art cinema that is held by Petrie, Murray, Blandford and others to be the typical form of film production during the 'new Scottish cinema' period. But is this what was intended at the point of subsidy? To begin to answer this question, we can start by returning to the decision minutes for the film's subsidy decision:

Very visual script but the Panel raised concerns indicating further development work was required to enhance the thriller content. It was thought that flashbacks could be moved around and the murderer's identity should be only given away nearer the end. It was noted that the film would appeal to a European Audience [sic]. (Scottish Screen, 2001b)

If the decision minutes present the film as essentially an auteur film dominated by Mackenzie's 'visual' imagination and aimed at the European market (which, as I argued earlier, can be read here as stereotypical short hand for 'arthouse market'), the simultaneous mention of the film as a 'thriller' may be somewhat unexpected. Not only because this is an unlikely characterization of the film, but also because one would think genre not to be especially important in a film that is praised in terms of authorial vision. As Elsaesser points out, the Romantically-conceived arthouse director is traditionally seen as standing opposed to genres and formulas, instead relying on their own visions to create their films (2005, p. 52). The view of the film articulated in the minutes is thus apparently contradictory, as the praise for the personal vision and art cinema qualities of the project are juxtaposed with suggestions for changes to that personal vision and a hope for greater popular cinema appeal.

The film's final incarnation makes it difficult to discern any thriller content at all, as the revelation of Joe's complicity in Cathie's death does not solve a mystery in the film as much as it develops Joe's character as a tortured, amoral wanderer. In spite of this the film was promoted, and to a lesser extent received, in terms like those which surface in the decision minutes. The press pack describes the film as a 'moody, sensual thriller' (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 1) and reviewers, including *The Observer's* Phillip French (2003, p. 9) amongst others, subsequently pick up on this terminology (e.g. Christopher, 2003; Sandhu, 2003b). In this sense, such promotion and reviews participate in depicting the film in terms that bridge the art cinema/popular cinema divide in which artistic elements such as the 'custard scene' can be seen as erotic moments familiar from thrillers such as *Jagged Edge* (Richard Marquand, 1985), Rafelson's version of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, or *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1992), films that are themselves often infused with noirish stylistic tendencies.⁶⁷

Young Adam does not operate on the same textual level as *Jagged Edge* or *Basic Instinct*, but instead bears a more substantial textual and extratextual resemblance to films such as *Blow Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966) or the films of Nicholas Roeg, especially his *Bad Timing* (1980), all of which deal with sexuality, violence and moral transgression in ways that are both visceral and cerebral. These films were, roughly speaking, art-thriller hybrids and were modestly successful in terms of achieving a degree of 'cross-over' success. Taking into account the fact that Jeremy Thomas produced not only *Young Adam* but also *Bad Timing*, we come to the final member of the creative team mentioned earlier in the application, and are given grounds to begin to suspect that he is perhaps the most influential of the group, even if

he is the least discussed in the final minutes. It is thus to the producer and role that this figure plays in the film that I now turn.

Section 4: The Producer as Author?: Jeremy Thomas and *Young Adam*

4.1: Subsidy and the Producer

Reading the subsidy application form itself, one cannot overlook the discursive weighting given to the film's producer. A full nine of the twenty-five pages that make up the *Young Adam* application package are devoted exclusively to Jeremy Thomas and his production company, Recorded Picture Company. This compares to four mentions in total of David Mackenzie which, taken together, would not add up to a single page of text. The portions of the application dedicated to Thomas include a two page biography of the producer as well as a complete listing of the films he had worked on up to this point, as well as all a series of pieces of information on things such as VAT numbers, production experience, contact persons and so on, all of which are the responsibility of the producer, and which when taken together add up to a very large portion of the application. The suspicion created by such a discursive imbalance between producer and director is that, even if the director is mentioned in the decision minutes, it is the producer who is the most important figure for this successful application. This suspicion is especially piqued by one particular question that reads in part 'Who within the organisation will take core responsibility for [managing the project]'; the applicants' response: 'Jeremy Thomas will be the producer of the film and will oversee every aspect of its evolution', after which follows the

aforementioned biography of Thomas that lists his box-office successes as well as the awards he his films have received (Scottish Screen, 2001b, p. 11). In some ways this is typical of British subsidy programmes more generally: as in an interview with the author one veteran of funding panels described the ideal candidate for lottery funding as one that features a first or second-time director, a script which is personal in nature and an experienced producer to oversee it all (Shannon, 2005). Such passages and such policies invite questions regarding the influence Thomas eventually exerted on the film, questions I will be exploring throughout this section of the chapter.

4.2: The Producer as Author?

The mention of Jeremy Thomas and his considerable track record in the passage on ‘high artistic quality’ cited above is the most telling instance of the extent to which Thomas’s participation in the project is one of the key ‘promises’ on the part of the applicants. The types of films that comprise Thomas’s CV, which is after all listed in the application, including *Bad Timing*, *The Last Emperor* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1987), *Sexy Beast* (Jonathan Glazer, 2000), *Rabbit Proof Fence* (Phillip Noyce, 2002) are particular types of film which have been successful in terms of both reaching audiences as well as winning festival prizes and other sorts of awards. Such a career underscores Thomas’s ability to tap a market niche for films with high artistic credentials but also a degree of accessibility. In her study of the history of the reception of films, academic and otherwise, Janet Staiger discusses a number of influential paradigms in film studies, including auteur study, genre analysis and national cinema, and terms such paradigms ‘reading strategies’ which can produce discrete sets of meanings from similar texts (1992, p. 95). Having already discussed

national and auteurist reading strategies as they have been encouraged and applied to the film, could we also productively examine the film using a reading strategy that is centred around Jeremy Thomas and his previous work? As Andrew Spicer has noted regarding the general problems faced in researching producers, assessment of the achievements of individual producers who have worked with numerous directors is especially difficult (2004, p. 46), but by looking at Thomas's oeuvre as a whole there are a number of patterns in terms of the contents and discursive contexts of his films which arise. In pursuing such a critical approach to Thomas's work, I will be drawing on the work of one writer who has attempted to apply such a unifying authorial persona to the producer's films, journalist Tim Adler in his *The Producers: Money, Movies and Who Really Calls the Shots* (2004). Here Adler profiles a number of influential producers who have worked with auteur directors, such as Alberto Grimaldi and Andrew Macdonald, and attempts to establish each of them, and not the directors, as the most important creative agents involved with their respective films.

To see that the deployment of a producer-oriented 'reading strategy' can reproduce the hagiographic excesses of its director-oriented counterpart, one need look no further than one of Adler's comments on *Young Adam*: 'Thomas's production is one of the most satisfying elements in this dream poem of a film' (2004, p. 187). What exactly constitutes 'Thomas's production' is never quite explained but there are a number of similarities between the film and a number of other projects that Thomas was involved in either as the producer or an executive producer. Three of these are especially relevant for this discussion of *Young Adam*, those being the prominence of sexuality within the film and its reception, the importance of adaptation and finally aesthetics and marketing that make the film both artistically 'serious' and accessible to mainstream audiences.

4.3: Sexuality and Censorship in Thomas's Oeuvre

Looking at the film from the perspective of Thomas's oeuvre, we can see *Young Adam's* usage of sexuality, as well as the attendant controversies stemming from such usage, as adhering to a pattern which emerges in both the texts and the reception of films that he is involved with. Amongst works such as *Bad Timing*, *Crash* (David Cronenberg, 1996), *Gohatto* (Ngisa Oshima, 1999), *Stealing Beauty* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1994), *Naked Lunch* (David Cronenberg, 1991), *The Dreamers* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 2004) and *The Sheltering Sky* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1990) are to be found numerous instances of sexuality which is considered transgressive of mainstream film-going tastes and sensibilities, including full frontal male nudity, incestuous sex, homoerotic sex, ambiguously rendered rape scenes, and necrophilia. Whatever form it may take in individual films, sexual explicitness is something present across Thomas's oeuvre and is always presented as something more than mere titillation, instead being used to develop characters and reinforce the themes of the films. The rape/necrophilia scene in *Bad Timing* shows Alex's (Art Garfunkel) obsession with Milena (Theresa Russell) to have consumed him to the point of lunacy. The multiple affairs embarked upon by the characters in *The Sheltering Sky* and *Crash* are expressions of their unhappiness with everyday married life (something that can also be said of Ella in *Young Adam*). Growing up and being initiated into the world of adulthood underpins the sexual encounters in *Stealing Beauty* and *The Dreamers*, and so forth.

The sex scenes in *Young Adam*, which even when not as extreme as the 'custard scene', are cruel at times and on the whole unpleasant and decidedly non-

titillating (one reviewer described them as ‘ghastly’ [Gilbey, 2003, p. 18]), are especially similar in this regard to those found in *Crash*, which Adler describes as ‘as sexually exciting as a gear box oil change’ (2004, p. 184). Sex in the film becomes a matter of power and control, with the custard scene being one in which Joe reasserts his mastery over Cathie, as he did in an earlier scene in which he threatened to drown her by rocking the boat they are rowing together; this scene ends with the two making love. Similarly, the progression of Joe and Ella’s affair is marked by her increasing control over when and how often the two have sex, culminating in the jump cut from the two having sex to Ella paying Joe his wages.

Another, related similarity *Young Adam* has to Thomas’s larger body of work is the use that is made of controversy as a tool for promotion and free advertising. Battles over censorship were responsible for raising the profile of *Crash*⁶⁸ – a film whose tagline was ‘The most controversial film you will ever see’ – as well as other Thomas projects including *The Dreamers*, *Bad Timing* and *Young Adam*. The film incurring such controversy cannot said to have been altogether unexpected. Indeed, controversy is something that the film-makers actively sought to cultivate for the film, though they were thinking of a different part of the film than the full frontal nudity that eventually incurred the NC-17 rating in America. In introducing the custard scene, the press kit for the film claims that ‘There’s one particular sex scene in the film certain to cause a stir’ (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 3). The press kit goes on to say of McGregor that ‘The actor is in no doubt that the film’s sex scenes will cause a stir’ and quotes the actor comparing his role to that of Marlon Brando in *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) (directed by Thomas’s frequent collaborator Bernardo Bertolucci) and saying that he watched that film to prepare for the role, implicitly referencing the infamous butter and sodomy scene that provoked so much controversy

and publicity in the 1970s (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 8).⁶⁹ The press pack is also quick to assert that sex in the film is not just titillation, but is something very serious, saying for instance of McGregor 'But, he contends, the sex scenes are far from gratuitous' (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 8); Mortimer later calls gratuitous sex scenes in other films 'really sick and cynical' and describes them as 'merely appealing to people's basest instincts' (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 13).

The promotional signposting of this scene, with its erotic content, potential to incur controversy and possibly censorship, presents the scene as one that can potentially attract curious audiences and contribute to making the film a *success de scandale*. Numerous commentators go on to note the comparison to *Last Tango*, naming the custard scene as one of the film's most memorable sequences, echoing the scene's description in the press pack. Some reviews, such as Nigel Andrews's in *The Financial Times*, mentioning it in the story's headline (2003).⁷⁰ The spectre of censorship is also raised by Emily Mortimer in a profile in the *The Sunday Times*. Here she wonders aloud if the scene would be cut by British censors (Pearce, 2002). Also present in these reviews is the acknowledgment of Thomas's influence in presiding over possible censorship problems. One review quotes Thomas as saying that the film would likely face the same hostility and censorship problems that *Crash* did, in all likelihood due to the 'custard scene' (MacNab, 2003a). *Crash* controversies were also compared in one piece to those facing *Young Adam* as well as the similar difficulties that Thomas was facing with *The Dreamers* (Bamigboye, 2003).

Part of the promotional discourse surrounding the controversial aspects of the film is a repeated insistence of the artistic importance of sex in the film. The press pack quotes Thomas at one point as saying that 'sex is a crucial element in the film'

and that ‘If you’re making adult films, it’s bound to be a central theme. [...] Sex acts as emotional punctuation to the story. Joe is trying to lose himself in sex’ (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 3). The film’s DVD commentary track features Swinton discussing the ratings controversy in the US and criticising the ‘purience’ of American audiences. These are only two examples of many, as this theme remains prominent throughout the film’s promotion and reception. Sexual content, and the attendant issues pertaining to artistic freedom/integrity as well as the high art qualities of the film, thus serve to brand *Young Adam* in similar terms. But this is not the only common Thomas tactic to be found at work in the promotion of *Young Adam*.

4.4: Conspicuous Adaptation and ‘Literary Cinema’ in Thomas’s Oeuvre

In his profile of Thomas, Adler presents *Young Adam* as part of Thomas’s ‘cult novel trilogy’ along with *Crash* and *Naked Lunch* (David Cronenberg, 1991) (2004, p. 173), a group of films which in various ways made much of their literary origins. While I would agree that such is true of these three films, this does not quite account for the scope or the significance of adaptation amongst the films that Thomas has worked on. In addition to these three films, *The Sheltering Sky* (novel by Paul Bowles), *Everybody Wins* (play by Arthur Miller), *The Dreamers* (novel by Gilbert Adair) and *Fast Food Nation* (non-fiction exposée by Eric Schlosser) were all based on high profile books/plays. Such usage of literary source material is of course not a new or unique practice for a film-maker to adopt, as such materials bring with them pre-constituted stories and characters as well as, in the case of very popular books, pre-sold audiences. But Thomas adaptations make much more of their literary origins than most other films, even more so than those of the ‘heritage’ canon which have

been long held to trade on promises of fidelity to source novels (Higson, 2003, pp. 16-20) . Much effort was made in the promotional campaigns around *Crash* and *Naked Lunch* to attract the fans of the two rather cultish novels. The case of *Naked Lunch* is particularly pronounced in this regard. Its trailer consists mainly of an interview with William Burroughs and the DVD release features a documentary on the difficulties of bringing the hallucinatory world of the Burroughs novel to the screen as well as an interview with Thomas himself discussing, amongst other things, the experience of reading the book and meeting with Burroughs. Such a dependence on a book's pre-sold following was also seen in the promotion of *Fast Food Nation* and *The Sheltering Sky*, the latter of which also featured Paul Bowles himself appearing in the film as an on-screen omniscient narrator who speaks the novel's closing lines at the end of Bertolucci's film.

The difference between the status of Trocchi and writers such as Burroughs, Bowles and J.G. Ballard is in some senses an exception that proves the rule regarding Thomas's influence over the discourses surrounding his films. Despite Adler's grouping the novel and the film with *Crash* and *Naked Lunch* as constituting a 'cult novel trilogy', the following for *Young Adam*, which had been long out of print at the time the film was made, cannot be said to be on the same level of popularity as the grouping Adler provides. Hence the necessity of a marketing campaign in which the press pack includes a section detailing the life and work of Alexander Trocchi (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, pp. 5-7), and which included DVD featurettes with sections dedicated to explicating Trocchi himself as well as an audio recording of McGregor reading from the novel. Whereas the featurette and trailer for *Naked Lunch* could assume knowledge of Burroughs and his work, considerable effort had to be made in the case of *Young Adam*'s promotional campaign to ensure audiences

knew who Trocchi was. In other words, in the case of *Young Adam*, Thomas and his production company undertook a marketing campaign that made adaptation a conspicuous aspect of the film. What this does for the film itself and how it is understood to be somehow more culturally valuable are questions to which I now turn.

4.5: ‘Literary Cinema’, ‘Euro-American Cinema’: The Thomas Brand

Besides the section of the press pack dedicated explicitly to introducing the life and work of Trocchi, there is one particular mention of the novel and its author that is revealing of the strategic usage of adaptation in the promotion of the film. In the portion of the pack dedicated to interviewing Emily Mortimer, the actress is quoted in the following way regarding Trocchi and his novel:

‘It reminds you of Camus’ *L’Etranger* – it has the same existential quality. It’s like a hipster version of Camus, but there’s something more angry about this. This film will make people think differently and more aware of other points of view.’ The actress, who has a BA in Modern Languages from Oxford, was drawn to the richness of her character...(Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p.13)

Even before the comment on Mortimer’s education, which serves to confirm her intellectual authority to provide this commentary on Trocchi, this passage is one of the clearest instances of the promotion of the film in overtly intellectual terms. The references to Camus, complete with the title in its original language as opposed to calling it *The Outsider*, and the references to existentialism, Beat literature and arguably the angry young man figure all contribute to framing the film in a similar fashion. Such a strategy is apparent throughout the press pack and larger promotional

campaign, with literary figures such as Camus, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs and Leonard Cohen mentioned in the press pack and throughout promotional interviews with Swinton, Mullan and others.⁷¹ This is in addition to the press pack's cinematic references to *Last Tango in Paris*, film noir (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 1) and the films of the British new wave (Recorded Picture Company, 2003, p. 8), (two categories which I myself used to analyse the film above), all of which are echoed in reviews of the film and interviews with the cast and director, and many of which turn to the theme of 'Europeanness' (here again a crude synonym for art cinema) to distinguish the film from mainstream Hollywood and British cinema.⁷²

Such a promotional strategy in the case of *Young Adam* and across the career of Jeremy Thomas, especially in the case of the projects he worked on which were adaptations, can be usefully compared to Dudley Andrew's account of contemporary auteurism. Andrew describes a certain strand of auteurist film-making aimed at more 'discerning' film-goers, a strand he terms 'literary cinema', a 'cinema which is meant to be "read" rather than simply "consumed"' (Andrew, 2000, p. 24). This is a type of film-making that is meant to be received as something both accessible and in some senses 'educational' and, though he means the term to apply to auteur-driven film-making, the term can be applied to almost all of Thomas's films, which have been for the most part collaborations with established 'star' directors such as Bertolucci, Cronenberg, Oshima and others, or conversely emerging auteurs such as Jonathan Glazer and David Mackenzie. All of his films are at least branded in terms of intellectual cultural capital, hence his propensity to package the works with pedagogically toned promotional materials such as those regarding Trocchi described above, but also to the DVD extras included with *Naked Lunch*, the featurette on the events of May 1968 included with *The Dreamers* and the film on the life and work of

Takeshi Kitano included with *Brother* (Takeshi Kitano, 1999). All of these materials (which were produced by Thomas and some of which include appearances by the producer as a 'talking head') have the effect of rendering the films in question as something more than 'just' entertaining films.

But, by the same token, neither are Thomas's films packaged as esoteric art films and instead have included elements which broaden the appeal of his films. Genre has been important to *Brother* (martial arts film), *The Last Emperor* and *Gohatto* (historical epics), *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence* (Ngisa Oshima, 1980) (war film), and *Young Adam*, *Crash*⁷³ and *Bad Timing* (erotic thrillers). Casting is another element that broadens the appeal of Thomas films with pop stars being cast in some of his early films (David Bowie in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, Art Garfunkel in *Bad Timing* and Liv Tyler in *Stealing Beauty* who was at the time known only for being the daughter of pop star Steven Tyler), and all of his other films including at least one recognized international star. *Young Adam* includes two (McGregor and Swinton) and this has led to Blandford naming casting as the one element of the film which was aimed at broadening the film's audience appeal (2007, p. 83).

The blending of generic elements (the historic epic) with the use of recognized international stars (Peter O'Toole) are two of the reasons that Peter Lev includes *The Last Emperor* as one of the exemplary case studies of what he terms the 'Euro-American film', a category of film which attempts to blend elements of Hollywood production (big budgets, star casts, elements of recognized genres, production in English) with those of European art cinema (auteur directors, narrative ambiguity, character-driven stories), and which target both specialist and mainstream audiences (1993, p. 31). Taking away the large budget, much of what Lev describes is true of

Young Adam and indeed Thomas's oeuvre as a whole, with the drop in budgets being explained by the successive commercial failures of *The Sheltering Sky*, *Naked Lunch* and *Everybody Wins*, which shook investor confidence in Thomas's large budget productions (Adler, 2004, p. 178). The film conforming to a paradigm which combines some aspects of art cinema with mainstream appeal – something that the producers were conscious of trying to do (Mallman, 2006) – aligns *Young Adam* with the 'cross-over' film. While I will have more to say about this kind of film-making and marketing strategy at the conclusion of this thesis, for now I would like to return to the question of authorship as it applies to *Young Adam*.

4.5: More Thomas than Mackenzie?

Given all that I have described above, is it possible to say that *Young Adam* is more properly understood as a Thomas film or a Mackenzie film? In some senses this is a false dichotomy: there is no reason that it couldn't be both, and in many ways it most likely is, but asking the question can still lead us to some important insights into the film itself, policy and the market as they have effected Scottish cinema during this period. Indeed, there are more parallels to be found between *Young Adam* and the films of Thomas's oeuvre than there are to be found between *Young Adam* and Mackenzie's other feature films, *The Last Great Wilderness* (2002) and *Asylum* (2005). Indeed, there are a number of interesting contrasts to be observed between Mackenzie's films, particularly between *Young Adam* and *Asylum*.

Between *Young Adam* and *The Last Great Wilderness* there are few parallels to be found. The major similarity between the films – the theme of a young man coming to terms with the past – is more than outbalanced by the disparities in tone

(off-beat comedy at times, hallucinatory rural gothic horror at others), setting (modern day Highlands), pace (rambling and chaotic), to name just a few elements. *Asylum*, with its erotic thriller content, 1950s setting and brooding meditation on the personal repression in the decade, high-profile source novel (by Patrick McGrath), and internationally recognized stars (Natasha Richardson and Ian McKellan) would seem to be a very similar film to *Young Adam*. But the film barely made any impression at the box office in Britain⁷⁴ and has yet to gain any wider distribution. While it would be impossible to prove that this failure on the commercial front was due to the film having been produced by David E. Allen instead of Jeremy Thomas, one cannot help but wonder what would have happened if censorship controversies had arisen during the making of the film or if the film had been more effectively co-branded with McGrath's novel, if it would have made more an impression on markets or critics. One thing that can be more safely assumed, however, is that if *Asylum* had come before *Young Adam* with the same respective results, it would have been much less likely that Mackenzie would have been able to continue directing his own scripts and it would be more likely that he would have followed the same career trajectory seen in the case of Lynne Ramsay. So even if we cannot call Thomas the 'author' of *Young Adam*, we can, with some degree of safety, call him the most important creative collaborator on the film and perhaps in the career of young Scottish auteur David Mackenzie.

Section 5: Conclusion

I have hoped to show a number of things in this exploration of *Young Adam* and the circumstances surrounding its production and reception. The film, which has

been described by Blandford as yet another example of publicly supported art cinema, under closer analysis yields a number of important insights into policy, Scottish national cinema, art cinema and the position of artists in the international film market: in short, into all of the thesis's core concerns. At the time of its release, the film was seen as a major 'event' for Scottish cinema, a status created in large part through promotional efforts which pointed to the Scottishness of all of its elements, from setting through to stars, writers and director.

As a point of departure, I attempted to scrutinize these various aspects of the project, taking into account how the funding of the project by Scottish Screen was seemingly predicated on them. Such an analysis took into account national representation, something that was part of the appeal for subsidy and which has not been addressed in the critical literature on the film. My study of this aspect of the film explored its dependence on and reinterpretation of conventions and styles associated with Hollywood, British and Scottish representational traditions. Moving on to the Scottish artists involved in the project, I focussed on the film's director and screenwriter David Mackenzie, who was the least established member of the creative team. This was done for two reasons. The first was that the 'new Scottish cinema'/'Scottish cinema as an outpost for serious art cinema' paradigm of Scottish cinema historiography implicitly favours auteur production. The second was that policy is seen in such paradigms as enabling such auteurist self-expression, an impression that would take strength from the rhetorical weight that Mackenzie seems to have in the application for subsidy and the minutes which grant it. But looking more closely at the film, the policy documents themselves and the discursive contexts surrounding the film lead to the suggestion that perhaps it was the producer Jeremy Thomas who was in many ways the most important creative figure on the project.

The influence of the producer and the packaging of a Scottish artist's work for the international market recalls the situation examined in the chapter on *Local Hero* earlier in this thesis. Indeed there are a number of parallels to be observed between the films besides the pairing of an internationally-oriented producer and an emerging Scottish director. These include exoticised yet familiar views of Scotland, the employment of internationally-recognized stars, and the industrial conditions pertaining to artistic expression and market forces. With such similarities in mind, as well as a number of critical differences, and as a way of concluding the thesis, I will now turn to a comparative analysis of the films which will allow me to bring together the findings of all of the thesis's case studies into one final overview of policy, markets and Scottish national cinema in this period.

Conclusion

Section 1: Bookends: *Local Hero* and *Young Adam*

As I hope to have shown with my case studies, the relationship between policy and Scottish cinema has been significantly more complex than the ways in which it has been described in the historical accounts currently found in the field. Chapter Two showed that the market was not necessarily as culturally deleterious to Bill Forsyth and *Local Hero* as historians have implied. Chapter Three highlighted the effects of broadcasters bringing the ethos of public service to bear on Scottish cinema and argued that *Mrs. Brown* was exemplary in this regard as it provided a re-evaluation of Scottish history from a contemporary point of view. This latter point was especially important to note as most historians have been prone to dismiss the costume drama as tourist-oriented and ideologically regressive and Scottish cinema historiography has either neglected or taken an implicitly hostile position on the film's unionist content. Chapter Four explored the complex relations between policy goals of increasing social diversity on the one hand and filmic representations of multiculturalism in Scottish cinema on the other. The two films analysed in the chapter dealt with multicultural Scotland in very different ways and it was argued that perhaps Hindi-language production in Scotland, heretofore courted by policy-makers for economic purposes, could be seen as engaging with the multicultural realities of contemporary in ways that are different, but no less valuable, than the kind of film-making that Loach's *Ae Fond Kiss* represents. Chapter Five examined director Lynne Ramsay, one of Scottish film history's success stories, and her second feature film *Morvern Callar*. Here it was argued that policy instruments had allowed Ramsay to develop a

knowable auteur identity but had not necessarily laid the foundation for a sustainable career for the artist, a suggestion strengthened by Ramsay's inability to find a project for a long while following the release of *Morvern Callar*. The final case study, Chapter Six, likewise was concerned with policy's ability to develop indigenous talents. Here I sought to show that *Young Adam*, another success story in accounts of Scottish cinema, should perhaps be understood as the work of its English producer Jeremy Thomas more than a work of self-expression by Scottish director David Mackenzie.

With these case studies in mind, in this final section of the thesis, I will now turn to the larger picture. Though doing so will mean moving from individual films to larger trends and issues, the discussion in this conclusion will be structured around a comparison between my opening and closing case studies. As we will see, the parallels to be found between *Local Hero* and *Young Adam* are very significant for the argument that the thesis as a whole is attempting to put forward. The same is true of the differences between the two cases, which are also very informative. By surveying these parallels and discordances, I will hope to illuminate the changes in the landscape of the Scottish film industry during a period which has seen increasing investment from film policy bodies. Also, by comparing the critical treatment each film has received, I will also hope to make a number of points regarding the nature of Scottish cinema historiography, the home of a number of debates in which this thesis hopes to intervene. I will then conclude this chapter, and the thesis as a whole, by considering what the research in this thesis tells us regarding the global context of Scottish cinema, a subject currently of some debate within the field.

1.1: From the Kailyard to Kitchen Sink on the Clyde: Exoticising Scotland

To begin with what for Scottish film critics has been the most controversial aspect of *Local Hero*, and less problematic for the reception of *Young Adam*, I will compare the films in terms of national representation. As detailed in Chapter Two, *Local Hero* has been long held to replicate the clichés and ideology of kailyardism and tartanry. Such readings of the film implicitly or explicitly see the film as offering an exoticised, non-realistic depiction of Scotland which is essentially the same as the depictions found in externally-produced works such as *The Maggie* and *Whisky Galore!*. In my case study, I sought to show that while *Local Hero* undoubtedly drew upon these films, it also deployed a form of pastiche that allowed for similar pleasures to those found in the previous kailyardic films whilst simultaneously acknowledging their constructedness and parodying their conventions. Similar things can be said of *Young Adam*, though without the comedy. The film also draws on older, more familiar versions of both the historical time period and the national context in which it is set. Film noir, the ‘kitchen sink’ milieu of the films of the British new wave, and the films of the Clydeside tradition act as sources for the style, mise-en-scène, characters and storyline of *Young Adam*, and the film was promoted and received in such terms. Though a substantial difference between the two films could be said to be their respective historical settings (*Local Hero* is meant to be a contemporary view of Scotland, while *Young Adam* is set in the past), their representational strategies nonetheless both rely on a similar degree of national exoticism as a kind of product differentiation.

This is not to say there are not important differences between the representations and how they have been understood. It hardly requires pointing out that the perceived sentiment and whimsy of Forsyth's film contrasts sharply with the bleakness of *Young Adam*'s diegesis and worldview. Such a contrast in tone is matched by a related disparity in the ways that the films have been received both journalistically and academically. As detailed in the chapter on *Local Hero*, the film's infamous reputation within Scottish cinema historiography is related to its perceived lack of engagement with contemporary Scotland and, in McArthur's criticism especially, its overly optimistic worldview. In the academic literature that exists on *Young Adam*, the film is described as another art cinema treatment of Scottishness in the age of devolution, a description which is implicitly positive given the larger view expressed by Blandford that Scotland is the bastion of progressive art cinema within an otherwise commercially obsessed British film industry (2007, p. 83). The bleakness of *Young Adam* is thus somehow 'better' than the Romanticism of *Local Hero*, at least within academic circles. Ironically, such a view is strengthened by reconsidering the ways in which Forsyth himself is taken up in accounts of Scottish cinema. Against charges of Forsyth being a purveyor of superficial comic whimsy, Petrie and Hunter have sought to defend the film-maker's reputation by arguing that existential alienation and deep pessimism underpin much of his oeuvre (Petrie, 2000a, pp. 153-158; Hunter, 1991, p. 156) – in short, that Forsyth's work was closer than had previously been thought to the type later to be found in *Young Adam*, and that this somehow redeemed him as an artist.

Such attitudes regarding the kinds of representations on offer in the two films can also be found in the journalistic reception of each film, but there is a wider range of perspectives here on whether or not these were fair representations of Scotland.

Some reviews of *Young Adam* praised the grim aspects of the film (e.g. Romney, 2003; Gilbey, 2003), but dissenting voices can be found, some of which express anxiety over the dark views of Scotland in Mackenzie's film as well as in *Trainspotting*, *Shallow Grave* and other 'new Scottish films', and instead point to films such as *Local Hero* as the more authentic portrait of the nation (Nickalls, 2003; see also Nash, 1998, p. 286). Such views, which would no doubt be contested by many of those who have written about Scottish national representation, serve to remind us, amongst other things, of the folly of looking for 'authentic' representations. A quality such as 'authenticity' is ultimately a matter of personal inclination and not a hard and fast category of objective evaluation.

Similar views of 'authenticity' as pejoratively opposed to fantasy can be found throughout the films studied in this thesis. *Mrs. Brown*, like many so-called 'heritage' works, runs afoul of 'correct' national representation by virtue of its mise-en-scène as well as its political themes. The contrast which structured the chapter on multicultural Scottish cinema was partly built on the opposition between the critically respected naturalistic style of Ken Loach's film-making and the fantasy world of Hindi-language treatments of Britishness and Scottishness. The exception within the thesis's corpus to the rule of the prominence of national representation would seem to be *Morvern Callar*, but this is deceptive and somewhat paradoxical. Textually the film seems to want to distance itself from being particularly 'national', opting instead for a pointed sense of non-specificity.⁷⁵ Despite these attempts, as seen in my discussion of its reception, the film was nonetheless received as a national product by reviewers and journalists, showing that non-Hollywood films cannot escape nationally-oriented reading strategies, even within their own national contexts.

1.2: The Artist, Policy and the Market: Courting Cross-Over

I would now like to return to comparing *Local Hero* and *Young Adam*, focussing on the relationship between markets and artists, beginning with Petrie's description of *Local Hero* as a 'market-driven distortion' (2004, p. 209). As detailed in the chapter on *Local Hero*, the context in which it was produced provided the rationale for including it in this thesis. *Local Hero* was a privately funded project which was produced by a for-profit company with ambitions of exporting its products outside of Britain to international audiences, especially those in the United States. The question that arose in the chapter was whether or not this production context could be cited as the reason for the representations found in the film. By looking closely at the production documents from Puttnam's files it is apparent that landscape and small town comedy were perceived as the attractions in the film, to the extent that Puttnam actually asked Forsyth to reign in his usage of landscape so as to not 'milk it'. Concerns for the market were also found to be behind the removal of several instances of political commentary from the final cut of the film, possibly rendering motifs such as the overhead flights incomprehensible to audiences. While this change was made, the impression that one gets when looking at the many recommendations of the firms that oversaw the test screenings of the film (nearly all of which were *not* implemented), is that, on the whole, the film remained intact. Moreover, Puttnam himself has stated that he refused Warner Brothers' offers to change the film's ending to expand audience appeal. The relationship between market forces, national representation and artistic integrity in the case of *Local Hero* was thus shown to be less straightforward as historians have assumed. The corollary assumption to the

compromised status of Forsyth in the making of *Local Hero* is one that posits Scottish artists as having greater independence with an indigenous industrial infrastructure in place. Twenty years after *Local Hero*, *Young Adam* shows that such hopes have not been achieved, at least not to the extent that has been described in Scottish cinema histories. This is partially due to the fragility of the infrastructure, which meant that the film had to go through a tortuous production process and was arguably only made due to the involvement of a internationally recognized actor, Ewan McGregor (Mallman, 2006). Such production difficulties are reminders that policy, as it exists in Scotland at present, cannot protect films from the market, perhaps because, with its participation capped at 25% of a film's budget, it is such a relatively small investor in individual productions.

Also troubling the view of newfound independence for Scottish film-makers is the evidence of creative oversight within the policy system. The decision minutes on the Scottish Screen subsidy application for *Young Adam* are the clearest instance of this taking place when they read: 'It was thought that flashbacks could be moved around and the murderer's identity should be only given away nearer the end' (Scottish Screen, 2001b). This suggestion on the part of the Lottery Panel, the likes of which can also be found on the applications for *Dear Frankie* (Shona Auerbach, 2004) and *Sweet Sixteen*, where the language is particularly forceful in demanding that the film-makers abide by the Panel's 'suggestions',⁷⁶ indicates that subsidized films in Scotland are subject to market-oriented creative oversight by funders, and this is worth looking at in more detail.

Though Stephan Mallman (2006) and Rebecca O'Brien (2006), who took part in the funding process for *Young Adam* and *Sweet Sixteen* respectively, have stated that at no point did Scottish Screen require that they abide by these suggestions, their

presence in the minutes is a reminder of the myriad pressures placed upon lottery funders to make ‘better’ (be it more accessible or more artistic) films, pressures which are then passed on in some form or another to the film-makers themselves. Though there is no evidence that pressures ended up changing the film that Mackenzie sought to make (at least none as clear cut as the list of changes discussed in the *Local Hero* chapter), and Mallman has told me that Mackenzie ended up making ‘his’ film (Mallman, 2006), there is still evidence that indicates such pressures had some kind of effect.

The screenplay submitted to Scottish Screen in support of the film’s application is different than the final version of the film, arguably more so than was the case with drafts of *Local Hero* and its final incarnation on the screen. The order of flashbacks is indeed much different from screenplay to film and the disclosure to the audience of Joe’s involvement in Cathie’s death is made later in the finished film (Mackenzie, 2002) . This is not a ‘smoking gun’, however. On the film’s DVD commentary track, Mackenzie and the film’s editor describe the narrative ordering of the film as something that was changed numerous times during the final editing of the film and so it would be misleading to imply that the reason for changing the order was due to the suggestions of the Lottery Panel. That being said, there is no way to be sure whether or not such suggestions were taken on board in some fashion, contributing to the ways in which the artists imagined the film. It is also possible that the decision to delay the revelation of the Joe’s identity was simply borne out of the same idea expressed in the minutes, that being to increase the suspense and intrigue in the film. In addition to these changes to the script, Mackenzie was so concerned about audience appeal that he filmed an alternate ending which, in part at the insistence of McGregor, was not used (Mallman, 2006). So while there is not a documentable instance of

markets shaping the content of the film, audiences were a concern and the film-makers were conscious of making a marketable film, something that has been seen across the corpus of this thesis.

Even in cases where no comments were made as to the content of the films in the minutes accompanying decisions, we have seen many examples of applicants presenting their projects as both commercial and cultural. Hence the promise that *Morvern Callar* would be ‘accessible’ and that *Ae Fond Kiss* would find audiences within Britain and Scotland. Similarly, such pressures have been well documented for public service broadcasting since at least the Peacock Committee, helping to ensure that costume dramas such as *Mrs. Brown* remain one of the fixtures of BBC production as they consistently draw both audiences and critical acclaim. Crucial to this thesis is the appreciation that the same set of goals underpinned Puttnam and Forsyth’s approach to making *Local Hero*. Some things were changed to broaden the appeal of the film, but many were not. As Puttnam’s description of the reasons for refusing to change the ending makes clear, artistic integrity was important to the film, if for nothing else than as a selling point to a different market than that which would be going to blockbuster films. *Local Hero*, *Young Adam* and indeed all of the case studies presented here have been intentionally made as films for specialized audiences.

1.3: Production and Packaging: The Role of the Producer in Scottish Cinema

Examining the relationship between artists and markets points us to the final parallel between *Young Adam* and *Local Hero* that I would like to discuss here: the role of each film’s producer. In the cases of both films, I argued that the respective

producers exerted a great deal of influence over the films in question. In their capacities to bring together writer-director auteurs together with financiers and then later to package the two projects for the international market, there is much in common between Jeremy Thomas and David Puttnam. Puttnam brought together a lauded local auteur together with the biggest film production company in Britain at the time. So too did Thomas bring an admittedly less-heralded David Mackenzie on to the international stage and put together a complex (albeit ultimately unsteady) funding package for the project. It would not be overstating the case to argue that in each case neither film would have been made without the involvement of their respective producers. Much the same could indeed be said of all of the films discussed in this thesis, with (executive producers) Barbara McKissack and Andrea Calderwood guiding the career of Lynne Ramsay⁷⁷ as well as commissioning *Mrs. Brown*, and then selling the film's distribution rights to Miramax. Similarly Rebecca O'Brien has been described as a steadying influence on Loach's career by a number of biographers and historians (e.g. Hayward [2004, pp. 203-207], Fuller [1998, p. 178] and English [2006, p. 272]), in large part because she has repeatedly been able to successfully source funding, including subsidy, that has allowed Loach to continue making films. Though it is more difficult to assess the situation that led to *PIAM*'s making, it is nonetheless reasonable to conclude that the industriousness of the film's production staff helped to ensure its making across three international locations and that its producer Gulshan Rai, like those described by Dwyer (2006, p. 367), had a hand in deciding how the film would go about targeting the lucrative NRI market in Britain and elsewhere.

To return to the question of the influence each producer had over the films themselves, we can begin by remembering Petrie's assertion that Puttnam was a

producer who wielded too much influence over the projects he worked on (1991, p. 181). Again it is undoubtedly the case that he exerted a substantial influence on *Local Hero*, practically commissioning the script, taking Forsyth to see *Whisky Galore!* whilst he was writing the script and then later suggesting a series of changes to be made to the film. In spite of all of this, there is no doubting that *Local Hero* is a Bill Forsyth film. The unique style of comedy, with zany and oddball characters, the mysterious women which the male characters can only marvel at, and the downbeat melancholic edge to the film are all Forsyth signatures, and all of these were objected to by test audiences and were thus antithetical to market concerns, yet they remained in the film. So even though Puttnam certainly had an influence over the way the film turned out, it is not true that such influence outweighed Forsyth's. There can be no way of knowing (with the evidence available) how much influence Thomas exerted over the making of *Young Adam*, but his investment in the director's vision is one of his most famous qualities and it is very likely the case that Mackenzie got the same treatment that Bertolucci, Cronenberg and Oshima got from Thomas as well as, crucially, that which Puttnam afforded to Forsyth.

Where each producer's influence is most detectable is in the packaging of the respective films for the international market and, given McArthur's criticism of *Local Hero* as being 'produced and packaged' by David Puttnam in terms of kailyardism (1994, p. 119), it is worth looking at this point of congruence in some detail. In the case of *Local Hero*, I sought to show how the film was marketed in 'high concept' terms which were fashionable within the international marketplace at the time of the film's release. As such, the marketing campaign for the film accentuated the kailyardic aspects of the film, whilst neglecting to place such aspects in the ironic contexts within which the film presented them. Documents in Puttnam's papers show

that he selected poster images and other marketing materials expressly for the purposes of playing up these kailyardic elements and arranged marketing tie-ins with such companies as John Menzies, which further reinforced this type of branding for the film. This had the collective effect of ‘dumbing down’ the film – but only in the realm of promotion. The film’s academic and journalistic reception, however, closely mirrored the image of the film presented in the marketing of the film and criticized it accordingly.

In the case of *Young Adam*, I sought to demonstrate how Jeremy Thomas likewise wielded a great deal of influence over how the film was promoted to audiences, though his tactics were just the opposite of those employed by Puttnam. Instead of deploying ‘high concept’ marketing rhetoric, Thomas’s approach emphasized the ‘low concept’ elements of the film as well as those which presented it as ‘adult’, intellectually oriented and following in the tradition of art cinema works such as *Last Tango in Paris*, all while also promising ‘thriller’ content and an intertextual relationship to a forgotten Scottish author. Again, promotion has influenced the way in which the film has been received historically as one of the film’s achievements cited by Blandford has been its raising of Alexander Trocchi’s profile (2007, p. 83). This last claim in particular is an achievement that should perhaps be credited to Thomas’s marketing rather than Mackenzie’s film, as Mackenzie could conceivably performed an act of inconspicuous adaptation like so many other films have done, including *Asylum*, his subsequent film.

Thomas and Puttnam have long been seen as the two most internationally prominent producers working in Britain since the late 1970s and the working methods they have typically deployed reflect the realities of the British and Scottish film industries. Before the collapse of Goldcrest Pictures’ production department, which

was fuelled in part by overspending on Puttnam's project *The Mission* (Roland Joffé, 1986), and his disastrous tenure as head of production at Columbia Pictures, Puttnam's projects all followed a similar industrial formula. Budgets were neither very small nor very large and the success of the projects usually came down to the ability of the film to generate good 'word of mouth', aided by critical esteem, without the projects ever being perceived as elitist and esoteric. As such, marketing campaigns depended on awards as well as controversies or other opportune events, rather than large advertising budgets, to gain the necessary 'word of mouth'. Thus the marketing of *Midnight Express* drew upon controversies which arose due to the film's explicit and shocking content, as well as those related the film's depiction of Turkey (which its government strenuously objected to), along with the film's numerous awards nominations, all of which helped to make it a substantial success (Yule, 1988, pp. 148-153). Likewise was the box office success of *Chariots of Fire* dependent on the film's re-release after a successful Oscar night, along with a marketing campaign which capitalized on the patriotic zeitgeist surrounding the Falklands War (Hill, 1999, pp. 20-22).

As detailed previously, this strategy is also found across the oeuvre of Jeremy Thomas. An arc that saw Thomas also experiment with bigger budgets, leading to the damaging failures of *The Sheltering Sky*, *Naked Lunch* and *Everybody Wins* (Adler, 2004, p. 178), is another parallel to be found between his career and Puttnam's. Looking across the films studied in this thesis, we see similar formulas of small to medium-sized budgets⁷⁸ matched with creative attempts to market the films with various combinations of controversy (the continual royal scandals and *Mrs. Brown*; ongoing ethnic tensions and *Ae Fond Kiss*), authorial brand names (Loach and Ramsay), awards of various sorts (nearly all of the films have garnered some sort of

prizes, festival or otherwise). The producer, whose role is notoriously difficult to precisely define (Spicer, 2004, p. 34), is at least responsible for putting together a big portion of these packages, arranging finance, setting budgets, recruiting the creative talents, and at least in the cases of *Local Hero*, *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Young Adam*, overseeing the promotion and publicity for the films (Mallman, 2006; O'Brien, 2006). Looking beyond this thesis's case studies to other key works of the new Scottish cinema period such as *Trainspotting*, *Shallow Grave*, *My Name is Joe*, *The Magdalene Sisters*, *Breaking the Waves* and the more recent *The Last King of Scotland*, we can see roughly the same combination of budgeting and promotional strategies at work in each. Indeed, setting aside the somewhat anomalous instances of the Hollywood spectacles *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*, the medium-sized budget, creatively marketed 'cross-over' film has been the model that all internationally successful Scottish films have adhered to, and it is therefore possible to conclude that Scottish cinema, with or without public subsidy, is essentially a cinema dependent on creative producers.

Such an appreciation of the importance of the producer in Scottish cinema throughout its relatively brief history has two particular consequences for the ways in which Scottish cinema history is written. The first pertains to the ways in which the 'new Scottish cinema' has been characterized by historians. As described at the outset of the thesis, Petrie's accounts of the period have attempted to present the period as marked by a synergy of committed policy-makers, enterprising producers and visionary directors (2000a, pp. 172-221) or in another account, the artists themselves who have been enabled by institutional innovations (2004, p. 4). The latter position is itself implied by Petrie's appellation 'new Scottish cinema' which recalls the auteur-driven 'new' cinema movements such as the *nouvelle vague* of the 1950s and 1960s

or the new German cinema of the 1970s. What I would suggest as the more appropriate view would echo John Caughie's influential description of British cinema as a 'cinema of producers' (1986, p. 200), one dependent on those who organise disparate elements and, increasingly important in this era of multi-lateral co-productions as well as multiple subsidy bodies, performing the all-important task of assembling funding packages. In the context of this thesis's concern with the effect of devolved film policy on Scottish cinema, we see that, if anything, policy has served not to liberate artists from commercial pressures (see the case of Ramsay once again), but instead to increase the importance of the producer. Such a talent is needed now more than ever to approach the various funding bodies and to successfully convince them of both the cultural relevance and the commercial viability of the projects. This was predicted by former Scottish Screen CEO Steve McIntyre in terms of the increasing reliance on producers to organize the Scottish film industry (quoted in Petrie, 2000a, p. 178). This dependence, however, goes much deeper than just getting films off the ground. As was seen throughout this thesis, and was especially the case for *Local Hero* and *Young Adam*, Scottish films have also needed producers to get films to audiences. This overall dependence on the producer brings me to my second point and the concluding one for this thesis as a whole.

1.4: A Very British Cinema?

The proposition that Scottish cinema is now more than ever a cinema of producers also has ramifications for how we understand the nature of Scottish cinema. As detailed in the literature review which opened this thesis, there have been two

views articulated by Scottish cinema historians in placing Scottish cinema within a global context. Petrie (1996, 2001, 2005a) and Blandford (2007) opt for Europe, emphasizing the affinity of Scottish art cinema to the somewhat stereotypically conceived European model of film-making. Murray (2004, 2005) has contested this model of understanding, citing instead Hollywood genres and American independent cinema as the most appropriate comparison. Intervening in this debate, I would argue that if we must 'place' Scottish cinema globally, then we should see it as a uniquely British cinema. Petrie has argued that the Scottish film industry should be considered a devolved branch of the larger British structure (2000a, p. 186), and based on what has been shown in this thesis, a similar description holds true of the films produced there as well. This description accounts for the importance of the producer, which is long held to be characteristic of British cinema, but it also makes sense given the unique pressures that characterize British cinema as a whole. The mixed blessing of a common language with America has meant that there is expectation related to the perceived ability to export films, a perception that has led to innumerable disastrous attempts at big budget production. In addition to the lure of America, the temptations related to export stretch also to Europe, where British films, due to the English language, are more popular outside of their borders than other European nations' films (Jäckel, 2003, p. 119).

In addition to these pressures/temptations towards export, there is also the need to cultivate cultural prestige, which some have argued no national cinema besides those of the US, India and Hong Kong can do without (O'Regan, 1996, p. 111). Hill (1999, pp. 47-48) and Higson (2003, p. 91), amongst others have documented how such prestige is put to use in selling British films abroad since the 1980s. As Street has shown, the British films in the 1980s and 1990s which have been

successfully exported did not always have the large budgets once thought necessary to be competitive abroad (and which have led to the downfall of numerous production companies), and instead depended on positive word of mouth and creative distribution to ‘cross-over’ from the arthouse niche to mainstream audiences (2002, pp. 203, 206-210, 215). The list of works she lists in this category includes a range of films from *The Full Monty* to heritage films such as *A Room With a View*. At an aesthetic level, many of these films blend the conventions of art cinema and popular cinema,⁷⁹ and it is this blend of conventions which allows the films access to the audiences found at both arthouse cinemas and multiplexes. Similarly Higson argues that such hybrid ‘cross-over’ production characterizes much of the output of the British film industry, regardless of export intention or success, since the 1980s (2003, pp. 91-92). The films studied in this thesis have adopted similar strategies, combining generic elements such as love stories (*Ae Fond Kiss*, *Mrs. Brown*), comedy (*Local Hero*), erotic content (*Young Adam*) and the trappings of rave culture (*Morvern Callar*) and combined them with elements of art cinema such as ‘literary’ content (*Morvern Callar*, *Young Adam*, *Mrs. Brown*) and/or the unifying presence of an auteur director (all of the films except *Mrs. Brown* and *PIAM*). As such they could be analysed usefully from the perspective of American or European influence as these categories are deployed by Scottish cinema historians, but in trying to blend such elements, these films conform to a distinct prototype of British film production during this period as described by Street, Hill and Higson.

In terms of the production and circulation of the films studied in this thesis, what this research suggests is that the intention of policy-makers, and in the case of *Local Hero* a private producer, was to target this very British niche, and that promotion and reception followed suit. Such an understanding of the market logic of

Scottish cinema would also account for a number of films that were not discussed in this thesis, such as *On a Clear Day* (Gaby Dellal, 2005) or *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (Pratibha Parmar, 2006) which clearly imitate English film successes (*The Full Monty* and *My Beautiful Laundrette* respectively). These films are indicative of the belief of film-makers that British formulas for success exist based on previous cross-over hits, even if both films ended up being complete failures critically and at the box office. Reliance on 'cross-over' formula can also be seen in the latest international success produced by Scottish cinema, *The Last King of Scotland* (produced by Andrea Calderwood), a film which, with its story of a Scotsman finding romance and danger in an exotic former colony, echoes of a number of British filmic reflections on post-imperial Africa, such as *White Mischief* (Michael Radford, 1987), *Shooting Dogs* or *The Sheltering Sky*.

Given the close resemblance between Scottish cinema and British cinema seen in this thesis, the question arises as to how 'devolved' Scottish cinema actually is. While they have led to greater investment in the industry, despite implicit and explicit historiographical claims, policy structures have not had the effect of making Scottish cinema as independent or distinctive from its British counterpart as the devolutionary movement is held to have made the nation in political terms. This is not meant to belittle the achievements in Scottish cinema over the course of the last twenty-five years - the corpus for this thesis as well as films such as *Trainspotting*, *Ratcatcher* and *The Last King of Scotland* are evidence that the nation can produce very interesting and very successful films – but properly understanding Scottish cinema means not trying too forcefully to align it with larger political and historical changes. Doing so means overlooking and simplifying the complexities of the production, promotion, and circulation of Scottish films that were charted throughout this thesis.

Endnotes

Chapter 1: Review of the Literature, Methodology and Corpus

¹ Craig has since revised his views to take a more positive position on the role that myth has played in Scottish culture. See for instance his *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (1996), pp. 82-118.

² Here Nairn points to the fact that *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* sold more copies outside of Scotland than within it, and argues that this demonstrates that the book's loyalty was not to the nation that inspired it.

³ Caughie's (1982) contribution to *Scotch Reels* makes an explicit comparison between Scotland and the Third World when he suggests that Scottish artists look to Sembene or Cuban film-makers for aesthetic models (118-119).

⁴ For an account of these disputations, see Petrie's *Screening Scotland*, pp. 182-185.

⁵ See Julian Petley (2002) for an account of some of the controversies surrounding Lottery funding and other forms of film subsidy. See also outspoken Lottery critic Alexander Walker's account of his criticism of the Lottery system in his memoir *Icons in the Fire* (2004, pp. 230-286).

⁶ This comment from Higson is part of his longstanding debate with Hill regarding the usage of the paradigm of national cinema in relation to British cinema. In a number of writings published over an eleven year span (Higson 1989, 1995, 1996,

2000; Hill 1992, 1996), the two have contested each other's views on the issue. At the risk of simplifying the arguments in this debate, for Higson 'British cinema' is a term that can be applied to national audiences and that films produced in nations other than Britain can thus be usefully considered as part of British film culture. Hill on the other hand contends that only domestically produced films can deal with the complexities of the British experience. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Hill's view of national cinema explicitly champions culturally-oriented government support for film-making.

Chapter 2: Caught Between the Director and the Producer: *Local Hero*, National Representation and Market Forces

⁷ Interestingly the film's political satire did not go unnoticed by the Soviet government, which stopped the film from being screened by the British consulate in Moscow. For accounts of this diplomatic incident, see for example newspaper articles by Peary Jones (1983) and Robin Stringer (1983).

⁸ See Michie for one explicit comparative remark (1986, p. 261).

⁹ Illustrating his contention that kailyardic films portray Scots as out of touch with politics and economics, McArthur has singled out this moment as one in which "the level of the major unconscious ideology informing [the film] - the Scottish Discursive Unconscious - [] is all too clear" (2003a, p. 99).

¹⁰ See McArthur's account of the anecdote for just one version (2003b, p. 6)

¹¹ The joke then recurs late in the film when the villagers anxiously await Ben's decision. As a group of men wait grimly in Gordon's kitchen, they hold the model in their hands and one tries to sell his model house to another.

¹² It is important to note that Sillars's article, drawing on a newspaper reviewer, presents *Local Hero*, along with *Whisky Galore!*, as negative comparisons for the series, presumably seeing the film as a straightforward work of kailyardism (1999, p. 251).

¹³ Suggestion number eight; page 23 in the screenplay.

¹⁴ Suggestion number twenty-two.

¹⁵ Suggestion number fourteen, p. 3.

¹⁶ Puttnam memo, item number twenty-seven, p. 4.

¹⁷ This part of the trailer, in which the audience is presented with the implication of a narrative twist that does not occur in the actual film, can be seen as an example of what Kernan describes as a deceptive use of the Kuleshov effect, a practice she finds to be fairly common in her survey of Hollywood trailers (2004, pp. 10-11).

¹⁸ The alternate poster images, as well as the illustrator's memo can be found in the David Puttnam collection housed at the BFI, Box no. 7, item no. 36.

¹⁹ John Caughie, in a brief discussion of the promotion of Forsyth within Scotland,

says that this promotion specified that winners would stay in the same rooms that the crew did while they were filming the movie (1983. p. 45).

²⁰ Documents relating to these screenings as well as an entry form for the John Menzies Outfitters contest can be found in the BFI David Puttnam collection, box no. 7 item no. 35.

²¹ The name and date of this publication has not been recorded by David Puttnam's archivist. A clipping of the article itself can be found in the BFI David Puttnam collection, box no. 9 item 41.

²² See a memo found in the David Puttnam collection, box no. 6, item no. 34.

²³ For more on this sort of strategy, see Tiuu Lukk's description of marketing and distribution practices for independent and 'foreign' films (1997, pp. 120-143). In the course of describing the release patterns of many British heritage films, Higson expands upon Lukk's description (2003, pp. 98-100).

²⁴ According to documents in the David Puttnam collection the film had grossed over \$8 million worldwide through July of 1983; see box no. 15 item no. 64.

²⁵ The increase in Highland tourism is documented in the David Puttnam collection box no. 15, item no. 64. The information on Pennan's phone booth comes via the IMDB trivia page for *Local Hero*, available at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085859/trivia>. Accessed 15 March 2005.

²⁶ See for instance Petrie's account of the release of *The Killing Fields* and the publicity that surrounded it (1991, pp. 131-132). See also John Hill's account of the release and re-release of *Chariots of Fire* in *British Cinema in the 1980s* (1999, pp. 20-22). In both cases, the films were released on a platform basis with word of mouth and critical prestige helping to generate publicity for the films. In a movement strikingly similar to *Local Hero*, *Chariots* was also the subject of a very reductive marketing campaign focussing on national identity during its re-release. For an account of this campaign, see Sheila Johnston's article on *Chariots* (1985).

Chapter 3: *Mrs. Brown*: Scottish Cinema in an Age of Devolved Public Service Broadcasting

²⁷ These are *Trainspotting*, *Shallow Grave* and *Carla's Song* (Ken Loach, 1995) which were funded in part or wholly by Channel 4, and *Small Faces*, which was made by BBC Scotland.

²⁸ Another co-producing partner on the film, who I will not be discussing here, was Irish Screen. The participation of Irish Screen is an interesting aspect of the film's production history, particularly given the film's representation of Irish terrorism. However, in light of the controversies which plague American involvement in British television, I will confine my analysis to the involvement of American public television institutions.

²⁹ To reach this conclusion, Steemers draws on a piece by Manuel Alvarado (2000) which lists a number of poorly received works such as *Our Mutual Friend* (1998) and

Middlemarch (1994), but which also excludes the extremely successful adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995).

³⁰ See Chapter Two for my discussion of the ironic usage of landscape photography in *Local Hero*. In the case of *Shallow Grave*, I am thinking of the Highland ball which the housemates laugh their way through and where Alex (Ewan McGregor) gets in a punch-up with kilt-clad Cameron (Colin McCredie), a former candidate to let a room in Alex's flat.

³¹ Christine Geraghty also discusses the aspect of British costume drama acting that demands actors convey emotional repression, noting that such performances often command critical esteem and recognition through awards (2002, p. 47). Dench is amongst the actors mentioned by Geraghty in this regard, though Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Winslet are the main objects of her analysis.

³² This context was not completely lost among the film's journalistic reviewers. Alexander Walker (1997), for one, noted in *The Evening Standard*, that, despite impending devolution 'here you have the future of the British crown dependent on a Scotsman' (p. 27).

³³ See, for example, Joshua Mooney's profile of Judi Dench in *The Chicago Sun-Times* (1997), in which Dench talks of some of the discussions about Victoria and Brown with Connolly: "“Their relationship has always been speculated about as long as I've known,” says Dench, who was born and raised in England. Well, did they or didn't they? "Billy Connolly will tell you yes," Dench says, chuckling, "because the

Scots like to think somebody got their leg over the queen. And everybody in England will tell you, “I don't think so” (p. 20).

³⁴ See, for instance, his account of Channel 4's mid-1990s ‘move towards the US market and a form of relatively “safe” filmmaking’ typified by films such as *The Madness of King George* (N.D., 169). This part of Hill's overview presents this shift in strategy as something to be lamented.

Chapter 4: Bringing Diversity to Scottish Cinema: *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat*

³⁵ See for example the chapter on Channel Four and its effect on British cinema in the 1980s in Hill's study of the period (1999, pp. 53-70), or Wayne's discussion of the role that cultural policy could (and should) play in the maintenance of a space for artists from minority backgrounds (2003, pp. 115-117).

³⁶ Though the term has become ubiquitous inside and outside of India, as Dwyer notes, ‘Bollywood’ is an appellation that is resented by Hindi-language film-makers and too easily lumps together very diverse forms of film-making on the subcontinent (2005, p. 362). As all of the films I will be discussing have been made in Hindi, as opposed to the other major languages found in the Indian film industry, I will here use the more neutral term Hindi-language film or simply Hindi film.

³⁷ See for instance James F. English's overview of Loach's career since *Hidden Agenda* in which ‘seemingly modest provincial dramas’ such as *Raining Stones* (1993) and *Riff Raff* (1991) are argued to be more important achievements than

‘internationally-oriented’ films like *Hidden Agenda* and *Land and Freedom* (1995). which according to English lack the ‘sense of place’ of the other films (2006, p. 279). Interestingly, English’s dichotomous reading of Loach’s late career, which runs up to *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (2006) omits *Ae Fond Kiss*, which could be said to fit into both of the categories he suggests.

³⁸ A listing of the contents of Scottish Screen’s National Lottery application forms can be found in Appendix C.

³⁹ Information on the exact make up of the funding package for *My Name is Joe* and *Carla’s Song* could not be obtained from Scottish Screen.

⁴⁰ In the DVD commentary for *Ae Fond Kiss*, Laverty also mentions that they had only conceived of the films as a trilogy during the writing of the film.

⁴¹ As Deniz Göktürk notes, humour is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Turkish-German films which have sought to counterpoint older social-realist, miserablist representations of the Turkish-German experience (2002, p. 248). Such a trend echoes the trend within black British cinema described by Malik and cited above.

⁴² The rivalry between Glasgow football clubs Rangers and Celtic has long been underpinned by sectarian tension between the city’s Protestants, who generally support Rangers, and Catholics, who generally support Celtic. This ostensibly sporting rivalry has been the excuse for countless acts of sectarian violence and murder in Glasgow. For an academic study of the history of this rivalry and its

relationship to Irish immigration, see W.J. Murray's study *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland* (1984).

⁴³ This could have been a product of Loach's preference to allow his non-professional actors to improvise their own dialogue. The film's script does include much more overtly racist things for the boys to shout, including 'Jihad' as they chase Tahara (Lavery, 2003, p. 4), but such lines are not clearly included in the finished film.

⁴⁴ See Sherzer (1999) for an account of the biracial love story in French post-colonial cinema. See Göktürk (2002) for the usage of the plot device in German-Turkish films. Lee's *Jungle Fever*, with the biracial love affair at the heart of its narrative, would also be a key film in this context.

⁴⁵ See for instance a racist incident at a Glasgow wine bar which is found in the film's original script (Lavery, 2003, p. 23), and the stabbing of Casim's father by racist thugs, which is described in the film and included amongst the deleted scenes on the DVD release of the film.

⁴⁶ According to Variety.com (2007), the film grossed approximately \$30,000 at the U.S. box office. Additionally, the film was only reviewed in one newspaper in North America, *The New York Times* (Holden, 2004).

⁴⁷ The UK trailer can be found on the film's DVD release from Icon Entertainment. Both the British and French trailers can be viewed at <http://www.1000films.com/j.html>. Accessed 16/3/07.

⁴⁸ Wayne reports a similar situation occurring with Artificial Eye's distribution of *Land and Freedom*, in which the distributor would not allow the film to be shown in multiplexes, even though there were requests for prints from a number of exhibitors (2002, p. 21).

⁴⁹ Here I am drawing on anecdotal evidence taken from a television documentary entitled *A Very British Bollywood*, in which it is claimed that the tax breaks which have attracted many Indian film producers to Britain were originally intended to attract Hollywood productions. Similar assertions are made in a piece in *The Sunday Times* (2000).

⁵⁰ It is worth noting in conclusion to this section that, when discussing trade agreements in relation to Scotland, one must necessarily discuss British film policy and not Scottish film policy. As a state-less nation, Scotland is not in the legal position to negotiate separate treaties, and we are thus presented with a situation where institutional devolution has not created the local self-determination that it perhaps should. Nevertheless, as this could perhaps be the most significant institutional policy decision for multicultural film production in Scotland, it is necessary to discuss it here.

Chapter 5: 'Supporting Artists of Genius'?: Lynne Ramsay, *Morvern Callar* and Scottish Film Policy

⁵¹ See the call for distinctive film-makers which concludes McArthur's essay in

Scotch Reels (1982b, pp. 67-68) as well as that found in his later essay on 'Poor Scottish Cinema' (1994, p. 112).

⁵² Scottish Screen has not paginated the application package for *Morvern Callar* and I have therefore not included page numbers in my citations from that package.

⁵³ As a final irony, it is worth pointing out that the actress who was cast as Morvern, Samantha Morton, was actually not Scottish. It is a matter of debate whether or not casting an Oscar nominee and Englishwoman with an already established career in indie film-making constitutes a form of 'marquee "star" casting'.

⁵⁴ These interviews are listed in the section of Appendix B devoted to this chapter and can also be found amongst the list of references for this thesis.

⁵⁵ These documents are listed in the section of Appendix B devoted to this chapter, which also provides a brief summary of their contents.

⁵⁶ In the original treatment for *Ratcatcher*, James puts the past behind him and moves to the new estate with his family. Different revisions of the script had both Margaret-Anne and James dying in the canal at different points in the development process.

⁵⁷ These included objections as to the size of the cast (Warner had apparently included many of the novel's peripheral figures) and the decision to have Morvern narrating the film, amongst other things.

⁵⁸ An article in *The Guardian* (Arendt, 2006) reported that Ramsay had been commissioned by BBC Films to write and direct an adaptation of Lionel Shriver's novel *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. The article says that the film will have a budget of approximately \$6 million (approximately £3 million). A report in *The Scotsman* (2007) indicates that Ramsay hopes to begin shooting the film at some point in 2008.

⁵⁹ For this citation, I am indebted to Polan (2001, pp. 75-76).

⁶⁰ *These Lovely Bones* is concerned with a teenage girl who is raped and murdered by a neighbour and subsequently returns from beyond the grave to observe her family and her murderer.

Chapter 6: The Author, the Producer and the Market: *Young Adam* and Scottish Cinema in the New Millennium

⁶¹ The film generated approximately 174,000 admissions at the UK box office and a total of approximately 400,000 across Europe (Lumiere Database, 2007). The film also grossed a total of \$770,000 at the US box office, as well as \$100,000 in Australia (Variety.com, 2007).

⁶² In a piece in the *The Times*, the head of Council's Premiere Fund, Robert Jones, claims that the Council was not in fact lobbied by McGregor or anyone else, but does say that the Council was reluctant to invest in the film, saying: 'We do not live in a subsidy culture where we can afford to put money into films without the chance of making it back' (Alberge, 2003, p. 11). For his part, Stephan Mallman downplays this aspect of the film's production history saying that the Council did suggest ways of lowering costs but that they were merely hypothetical and not quite as pressurizing as

McGregor's comments may imply (Mallman, 2006).

⁶³ For a general discussion of pastiche and how it is deployed in relation to genre and history, see Richard Dyer's *Pastiche* (2007). Relevant portions of Dyer's book for this section of the chapter include his discussion of critical discrepancy in pastiche representations (2007, pp. 58-63), as well as the discussion of pastiche in neo-noir films (2007, pp. 120-125).

⁶⁴ And indeed the film's associate producer Stefan Mallman told me that it was a claim made only to appeal to the funding body's desire to assist tourist interests through film production, and was not based on the realistic expectation that the film would in fact inspire tourism (Mallman, 2006).

⁶⁵ *Young Adam* would turn out not to be Mackenzie's debut feature. Mackenzie's first feature was in fact *The Last Great Wilderness*, a film that is referenced in the decision minutes. But the application was accurate when it was submitted; due to the numerous delays in completing *Young Adam*, Mackenzie was able to complete *Wilderness* whilst waiting for financing for *Young Adam*.

⁶⁶ Before Joe attempts to seduce Ella he reminisces: 'And I remembered Cathie, whom I had lived with for two years before I ever came to the barge...' (Trocchi, 1983, p. 36). Joe goes on to vividly describe the circumstances of their first meeting. Mackenzie's version of the meeting largely falls in line with the scene in the novel.

⁶⁷ For a survey of the erotic thriller genre, see Linda Ruth Williams's *The Erotic*

Thriller in Contemporary Cinema (2005). Her account of the relationship between the genre and the conventions of film noir (pp. 1-76) are especially pertinent to films such as *Young Adam*.

⁶⁸ For a more detailed account of audience reactions to the sex scenes in *Crash* and the controversies that arose following the film's release in Britain, see Martin Barker, et al., *The Crash Controversies* (2001).

⁶⁹ See Lev for an account of the controversies surrounding the release of *Last Tango*, as well as a convincing argument that this was part of producer Alberto Grimaldi's strategy for raising the profile of his projects (1993, pp. 52-53).

⁷⁰ The scene is also referenced in headlines for Romney (2003) and Sandhu (2003a), in addition to innumerable mentions within individual reviews.

⁷¹ For just a few examples of such mentions, see Macleod (2004), Hodgkinson (2002) and Sandhu (2003a).

⁷² For just a few examples of such mentions, see Brooks (2003), Scott (2003) and Romney (2003).

⁷³ See Barker, et. al. for a discussion of how *Crash*'s erotic content and the controversy which accompanied its release led to the film being exhibited at both art house cinemas and multiplexes, as well as an account of how audiences at both types of venues understood the film (2001, pp. 48-61).

⁷⁴ The film registered 22,320 admissions in the UK, compared to 174,000 for *Young Adam* (Lumiere Database, 2007).

Conclusion

⁷⁵ This was not an aspect of the film that I discussed in any detail, due in part to my concerns with authorship in discussing the film. See Blandford for a more detailed discussion of national non-specificity in the film, including a quote from Ramsay regarding her intention to make the film more generic than what she described as Warner's 'parochial' novel (2007, p. 78).

⁷⁶ The decision minutes recording the *Sweet Sixteen* award read in part:

[T]he Panel agreed that the relationship between Liam and Pinball should be strengthened early on and the character of Suzanne should be developed further. The Panel supported this project but indicated that funds should be withheld until the script has been redrafted to incorporate the above points. (Scottish Screen, 2001a)

The minutes for *Dear Frankie*'s application approval read in part:

The Committee agreed that the project had a lot of promise but that the script had some way to go in development. The Mother character needed to be strengthened and the other characters did not feel as though they were in a contemporary age. Having read the supplementary notes it was felt that the team was already addressing the core issues in the script. (Scottish Screen, 2002)

Based my perusal of the version of *Sweet Sixteen*'s screenplay which was submitted along with the film's Lottery application (Lavery, 2001), no changes were made by

the film-makers. I have not consulted the screenplay submitted in support of *Dear Frankie*'s application.

⁷⁷ Kate Ogborn (2000) has written in more detail about the importance of Calderwood and *Ratcatcher* producer Gavin Emerson in Ramsay's career (p. 62).

⁷⁸ Statistics relating to the budgets of the films studied in this thesis can be found in Appendix A.

⁷⁹ *The Full Monty* features a mise-en-scène that is heavily reliant on the trappings of social realism, which Peter Wollen has described as serving as the British equivalent of an art cinema tradition (1993). Heritage cinema, as Higson has demonstrated (2003, pp. 89-95), is a kind of film-making which blends the aesthetic and industrial conventions of art cinema and popular cinema. On a related note, Hill also argues that one of the most significant changes in British art cinema in the 1980s and 1990s was a greater convergence with the avant-garde on one hand and popular genres on the other (2000b, p. 28).

Appendix A: Detailed Case-Study Filmography

This appendix provides details production information on the case study films. It also provides whatever box office data could be found on each film, preferring admissions data to box office receipts when both could be found.

Ae Fond Kiss

Year of Release: 2004

Approximate Budget: £3 million (Scottish Screen, 2003).

Producer: Rebecca O'Brien

Director: Ken Loach

Screenwriter: Paul Laverty

Executive Producer: Ulrich Felsberg

Co-Executive Producer: Nigel Thomas

Production Company: Sixteen Films Ltd.

Production Partners: Bianca Films, EMC, Tornasol Films, Matador Pictures and Scottish Screen.

Additional Funding: Glasgow Film Office, Diaphana Distribution, Cinéart.

Box Office Data:

Total European Admissions: 1,526,537 (Lumiere Database, 2007)

Admissions in Selected Nations: Great Britain: 101,639

France: 423,011

Italy: 335,137

Spain: 208,591

Germany: 129,810

(Lumiere Database, 2007)

Other Box Office Returns (in USD): US - \$30,148

Australia - \$218,417

(Variety.com, 2007)

Local Hero

Year of Release: 1983

Approximate Budget: £2.5 million (Petrie, 2000a, p. 155)

Producer: David Puttnam

Director: Bill Forsyth

Screenwriter: Bill Forsyth

Production Company: Goldcrest Pictures

Funding Partners: Warner Brothers (Pre-Sales for U.S. Distribution)

Box Office Data:

U.S. Box Office: \$5,895,761 (Variety.com, 2007)

No European Figures Available.

Morvern Callar

Year of Release: 2002

Approximate Budget: £3 million (Scottish Screen, 2000)

Producers: Robyn Slovo, Charles Pattinson and George Faber

Director: Lynne Ramsay

Screenwriters: Lynne Ramsay and Liana Dognini

Executive Producers: Lenny Crooks, Barbara McKissack, David M. Thompson, Andras Hamori and Seaton McLean

Production Company: Company Pictures

Funding Partners: BBC Films, Alliance Atlantis, UK Film Council, Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film Fund

Box Office Data:

Total European Admissions: 129,753

Admissions in Selected Nations: Great Britain: 84,102
France: 16,836

(Lumiere Database, 2007)

Other Box Office Returns (in USD): U.S.: \$267,907
Argentina: \$60,747
Australia: \$104,723
(Variety.com, 2007)

Mrs. Brown

Year of Release: 1997

Approximate Budget: £1 million (Higson, 2003, p. 92)

Producer: Sarah Curtis

Director: John Madden

Screenwriter: Jeremy Brock

Executive Producers: Andrea Calderwood, Rebecca Eaton, Douglas Rae, Paul Sarony
and Nigel Warren-Green

Production Company: Ecosse Films

Funding Partners: BBC Films, Miramax Films, WGBH/Mobil Masterpiece Theatre
and Irish Screen

Box Office Data:

Total European Admissions: 1,234,721

Admissions in Selected Nations: Great Britain: 890,080
Italy: 60,000
Spain: 90,136
U.S.: 1,810,437
(Lumiere Database, 2007)

Other Box Office Returns (in Australian Dollars): Australia: \$4,107,859
(Variety.com, 2007)

Pyaar Ishq aur Mohabbat

There is significantly less data available on this film than the other case studies. The film appears not to have had theatrical distribution in the Europe or North America. Information on budgets and other forms of distribution could not be obtained.

Year of Release: 2001

Producer: Gulshan Rai

Director: Rajiv Rai

Screenwriters: Rajiv Rai and Shabbir Boxwala

Executive Producer: Shabbir Boxwala

Production Company: Trimurti Films

Distributed in the UK by Eros Entertainment

Young Adam

Year of Release: 2003

Approximate Budget: £4 million (Scottish Screen, 2001b)

Producer: Jeremy Thomas

Director: David Mackenzie

Screenwriter: David Mackenzie

Executive Producer: Robert Jones

Production Company: The Recorded Picture Company

Funding Partners: UK Film Council, Scottish Screen, Warner Brothers and Sveno Media

Box Office Data:

Total European Admissions: 401,397

Admissions in Selected Nations: Great Britain: 174,616

Poland: 37,481

Spain: 28,112

Germany: 26,785

(Lumiere Database, 2007)

Other Box Office Returns (in USD): U.S.: \$767,373

Australia: \$95,469

(Variety.com, 2007)

Appendix B: Details of Primary Sources

This appendix provides a chapter by chapter overview of the specific primary sources which I used to investigate each case study. Some of these items are also listed in the References section of the thesis, but I have also included some items which I did not cite within the body of the thesis. Though they were not cited directly, I consulted these materials while developing the ideas expressed in each chapter. Not all of the following materials are currently in the public domain and in such cases I have indicated which organisations provided me with access to the documents.

Chapter 1 – Review of the Literature, Methodology and Corpus

McArthur, C. (2005) Interview with Christopher Meir, 19 July.

Chapter 2: Caught Between the Director and the Producer: *Local Hero*, National Representation and Market Forces

Local Hero (1999) Directed by Bill Forsyth [DVD]. Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers. (Contains theatrical trailer analysed in the chapter.)

Puttnam Papers

For this chapter I relied heavily on the documents found in the BFI's collection of David Puttnam's papers. In my notes for the chapter I have documented exactly where each piece of evidence can be found within the *Local Hero* portion of that collection. The number of documents was too great to individually list and describe all of them here, but the following annotated list provides an overview of the most important documents for the chapter.

Forsyth, B. (1981) *Local Hero: Screenplay*. Second draft of the film's screenplay dated November 1981. Available in the BFI Library, London, UK.

Mercer, B. (1982) Letter to David Puttnam, 15 October 1982. This letter applauds Puttnam's decision to hold off on recutting the film until test screenings were conducted in North American markets.

Del Belso, R. (1982) Reports from test screenings carried out by Warner Brothers in Seattle and Toronto, dated 18 October. Reports summarize audience complaints following the screening of a rough cut of the film.

Puttnam, D. (1982a) Letter to Bill Forsyth, dated 18 October. This letter lists changes Puttnam thought should be made to the rough cut of the film. It is not possible to determine whether or not this list was drawn up in direct response to the screening report. A second copy of this list is labelled, in hand-written script, 'Post-production' and contains either ticks, question marks or the word 'No' next to each suggested change. It is not possible to ascertain the specific date which these annotations were made to the document, but its heading points to these marks being made very late in the production process.

Lyon, V. (1982a) Test screening report, dated 22 October. Report is from an audience in London which saw a rough cut of the film.

Lyon, V. (1982b) Second test screening report from London audiences, dated 6 November. Report specifically refers to a new version of the film and the implication is that this second version was edited in response to the suggestions made by the first group of screeners.

Puttnam, D. (1982b) Letter to Bill Forsyth, dated 8 November. This letter contains several additional suggested changes to the film, presumably the second version which was screened for British audiences.

In addition to these materials, there are several undated audience questionnaires which asked about various issues including the film's funniest moments, most likeable characters and the like.

Chapter 3 - *Mrs. Brown*: Scottish Cinema in an Age of Devolved Public Service Broadcasting

All of the documents drawn upon in this chapter are in the public domain.

Chapter 4 - Chapter 4: Bringing Diversity to Scottish Cinema: *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat*

Ae Fond Kiss (2005) Directed by Ken Loach [DVD]. London: Icon Entertainment and Warner Brothers. Contains DVD extras discussed in the chapter.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2004) 'Banging the Drum for Britain in Bollywood', (Press Release), March (No day specified). Available online at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices/archive_2004/dcms028_04.htm. (Accessed 16 March 2007.)

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2005) 'Jowell Opens the Door for the UK Film Industry', (Press Release), 28 February. Available online at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices/archive_2005/dcms032_05.htm. (Accessed 16 March 2007.)

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2005) 'UK Film Industry To Join Forces With Bollywood', (Press Release), March (No day specified). Available online at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices/archive_2005/dcms052_05.htm. (Accessed 16 March 2007.)

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2006) 'UK Film Industry to Join Forces with South Africa', (Press Release), May (No day specified). Available online at:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices_archive_2006_dcms078_06.htm. (Accessed 16 March 2007)

Doyle, B. (2007) Email sent to Christopher Meir. 10 August. (From Scottish Screen Locations).

Laverty, P. (2003) *Ae Fond Kiss: Screenplay*. Submitted to Scottish Screen, dated 6 February. Obtained courtesy of Scottish Screen.

O'Brien, R. (2006) Interview with Christopher Meir. 26 August.

Petrie, D. (2005b) Email Sent to Christopher Meir, 14 November.

Reynolds, J. (2007) Email Sent to Christopher Meir. 24 July. (From Glasgow Film Office.)

Scottish Screen (2001a) National Lottery Application for *Sweet Sixteen*. Submitted 10 April. Obtained courtesy of Scottish Screen.

Scottish Screen (2003) National Lottery Application for *Ae Fond Kiss*. Submitted 7 July. Obtained courtesy of Scottish Screen.

Shannon, R. (2005) Interview with Christopher Meir, 4 May.

Chapter 5 - 'Supporting Artists of Genius'?: Lynne Ramsay, *Morvern Callar* and Scottish Film Policy

Scottish Screen Documents

Scottish Screen (2000) National Lottery Application for *Morvern Callar*. Submitted 10 April. Obtained courtesy of Scottish Screen.

Scottish Screen (2005)* Database of Films Receiving Lottery Funds, 2000-2005, [Online] Available at: <http://www.scottishscreen.com/> (Accessed 25 May 2005).

* This portion of the Scottish Screen website has been discontinued following the re-design of the organisation's website in 2006.

BBC *Ratcatcher* Documents

All of the following documents were obtained courtesy of the BBC archives.

McCance, R. (1996a) Memo, dated 27 September, to Andrea Calderwood, Barbara McKissack and 'Kate'. Memo discusses meeting with Lynne Ramsay regarding her treatment for *Ratcatcher*, saying that the director had 'taken on board' McCance's suggestions for re-drafting the treatment.

McCance, R. (1996b) Memo, dated 8 October, to Andrea Calderwood, Barbara McKissack and 'Kate'. Memo updates the recipients on what is apparently a redrafted version of Ramsay's treatment for *Ratcatcher*.

McCance, R. (1997a) Memo, dated 20 January, to Lynne Ramsay. Memo spells out a number of changes that McCance felt should be made to the screenplay for *Ratcatcher*. These suggested changes generally consist of including James in more of the film's scenes and otherwise developing his character to a greater extent. The majority of these changes seem to have been implemented in the final version of the film.

McCance, R. (1997b) Memo, dated 14 March, to Andrea Calderwood. Memo discusses possible changes that to be made to the screenplay for *Ratcatcher*.

McCance, R. (1998) Memo, dated 4 March, to Andrea Calderwood. Memo tells Calderwood that Ramsay has provisionally agreed to use a suggested alternative ending to *Ratcatcher*, but also notes that Ramsay is 'not happy' with the ending. It is unclear which ending is being referred to or if it is the one used in the film.

Ramsay, L. (N.D.) Fax sent to Ruth McCance, referring to meeting held on 19 February (no year is specified). Message responds to a number of suggestions that McCance has apparently made for changing the ending of *Ratcatcher*. Ramsay here offers two possible alternative endings for the film, one in which no one dies and one in which Margaret-Anne's mother drowns in the canal.

BBC Morvern Callar Documents

McCance, R. (1996c) Script report, dated 12 August, on Alan Warner's screenplay for *Morvern Callar*. The report spells out a number of problems that McCance had with Warner's screenplay, including the number of characters and its voiceover narration.

Dunphy, R. (1998) Script report, dated 1 October. Report concerns Lynne Ramsay's screenplay for a 30 minute short film version of *Morvern Callar*. Dunphy is generally positive about the script, but suggests that Morvern is too enigmatic and that the voiceover narration in the screenplay should be either expanded or removed entirely.

Unsigned memo, dated 9 May 2000, from 'Rene' to Barbara McKissack. Document updates McKissack on the development of the screenplay for *Morvern Callar*, informing her of a number of changes that were suggested to Ramsay.

Lynne Ramsay Interviews

Andrew, G. (2002a) 'Interview with Lynne Ramsay', *The Guardian*, 28 October [Online]. Available at:
<http://film.guardian.co.uk/interview/interviewpages/0,,834228,00.html>
(Accessed 16 April 2006.)

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- Andrew, G. (2002b) 'Lynne Ramsay Answers Questions From the Audience'. *The Guardian*, 28 October [Online]. Available at:
<http://film.guardian.co.uk/interview/interviewpages/0,,834229,00.html>
(Accessed 16 April 2006.)
- Bailey, A. (2000) 'Gutter Jewel: Lynne Ramsay Finds Beauty in *Ratcatcher*', 13 October [Online Interview] Available at:
http://www.indiewire.com/people/int_Ramsay_Lynn_001013.html
(Accessed 15 April 2006.)
- Bauer, C. (2000) 'Joan of Arc Goes Manic Panic: Interview With Lynne Ramsay', [Online Interview]. Available at:
http://archive.salon.com/ent/movies/int/2000/10/24/lynne_ramsay/index.html
(Accessed 15 April 2006.)
- Brooks, X. (1999a) 'The Mouse that Roared', *The Independent*, 12 November, p. 12.
- Donaldson, S. (2002) 'Film-Makers on Film: Lynne Ramsay on John Cassavetes's *A Woman Under the Influence*', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 November, p. 12.
- Elsey, E. (2002) 'Interview with Lynne Ramsay', in Elsey, E. and Kelly, A. (eds.) *In Short: A Guide to Short Film-Making in the Digital Age*. London: BFI, pp. 52-60.
- Elsey, E. (2003) 'Herstories: Lynne Ramsay in Conversation', *Vertigo*, 2 (4), pp. 14-15.
- Francke, L. (1999) 'Childhood is a Blank Canvas: An Interview with Lynne Ramsay,' Forward to Ramsay, L. *Ratcatcher*: London and New York: Faber and Faber, pp. xvii-xiv.
- Fuller, G. (2000) 'Lynne Ramsay: Interview', *Interview*. [Online] Available at:
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1285/is_11_30/ai_66937959
(Accessed 16 April 2006.)
- Hart, A. (2002) 'Ordinary People With an Edge: Lynne Ramsay on *Morvern Callar*', [Online interview.] Available at:
http://www.indiewire.com/people/people_030103morvern.html
(Accessed 16 April 2006.)
- Hoggard, L. (2002) 'How We Met: Lynne Ramsay and Alwin Kuchler', *The Independent on Sunday*, 20 October, p. 7.
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Chapter 6: The Author, the Producer and the Market: *Young Adam* and Scottish Cinema in the New Millennium

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Appendix C: The Scottish Screen Lottery Application

As the application for Lottery funding from Scottish Screen is a document that will be unfamiliar to most readers, I have here reproduced the questions contained on the forms which I have analysed in the course of the thesis, along with the sections in which they are grouped. Though the forms vary slightly over the course of the four years of applications which I have had access to, the following listing, based on the 2001 application form, is representative of the content of the forms which I have seen and studied.

The latest version of the application form, which is markedly different than the ones studied in this thesis, can be found online at:

http://www.scottishscreen.com/content/sub_page.php?sub_id=130&page_id=19

(Accessed 31 August 2007)

Section A – Contact Details

1. Title of Film
2. What is the total cost of the project?
3. How much money are you asking us for?
4. Name of Company
5. Full legal name of organisation if different from above.
6. Your name and position within the organisation.
7. Address for correspondence.
8. Daytime Phone Number, Evening Phone Number, Fax, E-Mail
9. Please give details of any special communication needs you may have.
10. When is a good time to contact you?

Section B – About Your Project

Project Description

11. Please give the following details: Title of Film; Estimated Running Time; Name of Producer; Name of Director; Name of Writer; Film Stock.
12. Please give a brief summary (no more than 30 words) of the film. (We will use this as the basis for all our communications and it may appear in press releases.)
13. When do you plan to go into pre-production?

14. When do you hope to finish the project?

Project Budget

15. What is the total cost of the project?

16. How much money are you asking us for?

17. What percentage is this of the total cost?

Partnership Funding

18. What is your strategy for raising funds for your film? What steps have you already taken to secure this funding?

19. Please give details of other likely finance into the project. [sic]

20. Please explain how you have worked out the values of any in-kind contributions.

21. What fall-back plans do you have if conditional funding does not come through?

Recoupment

22. Please describe the proposed recoupment schedule for this film taking into account the requirements of all of the financiers including Scottish Screen.

Schedule of Information

23. Please supply the following information and tick the boxes on the documents checklists at the end to show the documents you are enclosing.

- Final draft script
- Plot synopsis
- Character descriptions
- Project history
- Detailed production schedule. Who prepared it?
- Detailed production budget. Who prepared it?
- Casting plan
- Financing plan
- CVs of the producer, the writer and the director
- Details of any underlying rights
- Details of the completion guarantee

Section C – Meeting the Criteria

Public Benefit

24. How many people will benefit from the project and in what ways will they benefit?

25. What positive steps will you take to encourage equal opportunities?

Developing Scottish Film-making

26. How is your project culturally relevant to Scotland?

27. Please describe briefly the contribution your company makes to the Scottish screen industry both historically and planned. [sic]

28. Where will your production office for this film be based?

29. Where do you plan to shoot the film?

30. Where are the following team members based?: Writer, director, producer, composer, actors, musicians, key crew members.

31. What percentage of the budget will be spent in Scotland?

32. What percentage of the film will be carried out in Scotland? [sic]

33. What plans do you have to create training opportunities in Scotland?

Stage of Development of Project

34. What further steps do you need to undertake before the project is ready to move towards production?

Artistic Quality

35. Why do you consider this project to be of high artistic quality and ready to go into production soon? If you have any confirming evidence of this (independent script reports, commitments from other financiers, commitments from distributors, etc.) please provide this.

36. Why do you consider the creative team is appropriate to this project? [sic] If available, please provide director's notes, storyboards, etc.

Reaching Audiences

37. Please outline the expected UK release plans for this film. What is the basis of this expectation? What is the likely theatrical availability to Scottish audiences? What interest has been secured from a UK distributor? If a UK broadcaster is involved as a financier, what is the likely theatrical window? Where possible, please provide evidence for your arguments.

38. Internationally, what are your target territories? Please provide sales estimates.

Function of Lottery Investment

39. How will Lottery funding add value to your project?

40. Why can you not make your film with money from other sources?

Management and Staffing

41. Please describe arrangements to manage this production. Who within the organisation will take core responsibility for this? Please indicate their relevant experience.

Section D – Your Organisation

42. Please briefly describe your company and its core operation.

43. When was your organisation established?

44. Legal Status?

45. Are you a registered charity?

46. Are you registered for VAT?

47. What is your organisation's yearly turnover?

48. If your organisation is part of a group, please give the names of the holding company and the other group companies.

49. What previous experience does your organisation have of film production?

Section E – Other Funding Applications

50. Are you applying to any other National Lottery funder for this project?

51. Please tell us if you are applying to any other Lottery funder for any other project.

52. Have you applied for any Lottery money before, successfully or unsuccessfully?

53. Have you applied for any non-Lottery funds from Scottish Screen in the last year?

Filmography and Teleography

The following is an alphabetical listing of all the films and television programmes mentioned in the course of this thesis. Included with the film titles are the names of the films' directors as well as the year in which the films were released. Information on television programmes includes the year in which the programmes were first broadcast and the network on which they appeared. Appendix A contains more detailed information on this thesis's case study films, including producers, production companies, as well as, where available, budgets and box office receipts.

Films

16 Years of Alcohol (Richard Jobson, 2003)

À la place du coeur (Robert Guédiguian, 1998)

The Acid House (Paul McGuigan, 1999)

Ae Fond Kiss (Ken Loach, 2004)

L'Afrance (Alain Gomis, 2001)

American Cousins (Don Coutts, 2003)

Anita and Me (Metin Hüseyin, 2002)

Another Time, Another Place (Michael Radford, 1984)

Asylum (David Mackenzie, 2005)

Bad Timing (Nicholas Roeg, 1980)

Basic Instinct (Paul Verhoeven, 1992)

Beautiful People (Jasmin Dizdar, 1999)

Bend It Like Beckham (Gurinder Chadha, 2002)

Bhaji on the Beach (Gurinder Chadha, 1993)

The Big Man (David Leland, 1990)

Billy Elliot (Stephen Daldry, 2000)

Blow Up (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966)

Blue Black Permanent (Margaret Tait, 1992)

The Boxer (Jim Sheridan, 1998)

The Brave Don't Cry (Philip Leacock, 1952)

Brigadoon (Vincente Minnelli, 1954)

Brother (Takeshi Kitano, 1999)

Cal (Pat O'Connor, 1984)

Carla's Song (Ken Loach, 1995)

Chariots of Fire (Hugh Hudson, 1981)

Chemins de Traverse (Manuel Poirier, 2004)

City of God (Fernando Meirelles, 2002)

Comfort and Joy (Bill Forsyth, 1984)

Crash (David Cronenberg, 1996)

Dance with a Stranger (Mike Newell, 1985)

Dear Frankie (Shona Auerbach, 2004)

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (Aditya Chopra, 1995)

Do the Right Thing (Spike Lee, 1989)

Double Indemnity (Billy Wilder, 1944)

The Dreamers (Bernardo Bertolucci, 2004)

East is East (Damien O'Donnell, 1999)

The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill but Came Down a Mountain (Christopher Monger, 1995)

Everybody Wins (Karel Reisz, 1990)

Far From Heaven (Todd Haynes, 2003)

Fast Food Nation (Richard Linklater, 2006)

Floodtide (Frederick Wilson, 1949)

The Full Monty (Peter Cattaneo, 1997)

Gasman (Lynne Ramsay, 1998)

Gohatto (Ngisa Oshima, 1999)

The Gorbals Story (David MacKane, 1950)

Gregory's Girl (Bill Forsyth, 1981)

La Haine (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995)

A Handful of Dust (Charles Sturridge, 1988)

Head On (Fatih Akin, 2003)

Hidden Agenda (Ken Loach, 1990)

Holy Smoke (Jane Campion, 1999)

Howard's End (James Ivory, 1992)

How Green Was My Valley (John Ford, 1941)

I'm British But... (Gurinder Chadha, 1990)

In the Cut (Jane Campion, 2003)

The Jacket (John Maybury, 2005)

Jagged Edge (Richard Marquand, 1985)

Jungle Fever (Spike Lee, 1992)

Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna (Karan Johar, 2006)

Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham (Karan Johar, 2001)

Kill the Day (Lynne Ramsay, 1997)

The Killing Fields (Roland Joffé, 1984)

Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (Karan Johar, 1998)

Land and Freedom (Ken Loach, 1995)

The Last Emperor (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1987)

The Last Great Wilderness (David Mackenzie, 2002)

The Last King of Scotland (Kevin McDonald, 2006)

Last Tango in Paris (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1972)

Local Hero (Bill Forsyth, 1982)

Look Back in Anger (Tony Richardson, 1958)

The Madness of King George (Nicholas Hytner, 1994)

The Magdalene Sisters (Peter Mullan, 2002)

The Maggie (Alexander Mackendrick, 1954)

The Man Who Wasn't There (Joel Coen, 2001)

Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence (Ngisa Oshima, 1980)

Meshes of the Afternoon (Maya Deren, 1943)

Midnight Express (Alan Parker, 1978)

The Mission (Roland Joffé, 1986)

Morvern Callar (Lynne Ramsay, 2002)

The Mother (Roger Michell, 2003)

Mouchette (Robert Bresson, 1967)

Mrs. Brown (John Madden, 1997)

My Beautiful Laundrette (Stephen Frears, 1985)

My Name is Joe (Ken Loach, 1998)

Naked Lunch (David Cronenberg, 1991)

The Navigators (Ken Loach, 2001)

Nina's Heavenly Delights (Pratibha Parmar, 2006)

On a Clear Day (Gaby Dellal, 2005)

Orphans (Peter Mullan, 1999)

Ossessione (Luchino Visconti, 1943)

Pardes (Subhash Gai, 1997)

The Passenger (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1974)

Persuasion (Roger Michell, 1995)

The Piano (Jane Campion, 1993)

Portrait of a Lady (Jane Campion, 1996)

The Postman Always Rings Twice (Tay Gannett, 1946)

The Postman Always Rings Twice (Bob Rafelson, 1981)

Prague (Ian Sellar, 1990)

The Private Life of Henry VIII (Alexander Korda, 1938)

Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabet (Rajiv Rai, 2001)

The Quiet Man (John Ford, 1952)

Rabbit Proof Fence (Phillip Noyce, 2002)

Raining Stones (Ken Loach, 1993)

Ratcatcher (Lynne Ramsay, 1999)

Regeneration (Gillies MacKinnon, 1997)

Riff Raff (Ken Loach, 1991)

Rob Roy (Michael Caton-Jones, 1995)

A Room With A View (James Ivory, 1987)

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid (Stephen Frears, 1987)

Sexy Beast (Jonathan Glazer, 2000)

Shaheed Uddam Singh (Chitraarth, 2000)

Shallow Grave (Danny Boyle, 1994)

The Sheltering Sky (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1990)

Shooting Dogs (Michael Caton-Jones, 2005)

Silent Scream (David Hayman, 1990)

Sixty Glorious Years (Herbert Wilcox, 1939)

Small Deaths (Lynne Ramsay, 1996)

Small Faces (Gillies MacKinnon, 1995)

Stealing Beauty (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1994)

Sweet Sixteen (Ken Loach, 2002)

Sweetie (Jane Campion, 1989)

That Sinking Feeling (Bill Forsyth, 1979)

Trainspotting (Danny Boyle, 1996)

Velvet Goldmine (Todd Haynes, 1998)

Venus Peter (Ian Sellar, 1989)

Victoria the Great (Herbert Wilcox, 1936)

A Way of Life (Amma Asante, 2004)

Whisky Galore! (Alexander Mackendrick, 1949)

White Mischief (Michael Radford, 1987)

Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself (Lone Sherfig, 2002)

Wild West (David Attwood, 1992)

The Wind that Shakes the Barley (Ken Loach, 2006)

The Winter Guest (Alan Rickman, 1997)

A Woman Under the Influence (John Cassavetes, 1974)

Yasmin (Kenny Glenaan, 2004)

Young Adam (David Mackenzie, 2003)

Zoolander (Ben Stiller, 2001)

Television Programmes

As Time Goes By (BBC, 1992)

Brideshead Revisited (ITV, 1981)

Cathy Come Home (BBC, 1965)

Hamish Macbeth (BBC, 1995)

The Jewel in the Crown (ITV, 1984)

Middlemarch (BBC, 1994)

Monarch of the Glen (BBC, 2000)

Our Mutual Friend (BBC, 1998)

Pride and Prejudice (BBC, 1995)

Ruffian Hearts (BBC, 1995)

Tutti Frutti (BBC, 1987)

A Very British Bollywood (BBC, 2006)

Your Cheatin' Heart (BBC, 1990)

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In order to assist the reader, I have divided my references into three categories depending on the kind of materials I have cited. These are: scholarly books and articles; journalistic articles and reviews; and other types of sources.

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